

HAMPSHIRE LIFE

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE COUNTY

JULY 2020 | hampshire-life.co.uk

NATURE'S TAKEOVER

How lockdown has let wildlife in

Gilbert White is
300

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world's first
naturalist*

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HAMPSHIRE GREAT

Portsmouth inspiration of
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Editor's comment

Returning to work during a pandemic is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, unexpected time together as a family has been a total privilege, and we've been out exploring parts of our local area that we never even knew existed. I've loved the adventures we've had all together. Time travelling on rambles around old ruins, bountiful beach days with takeaway fish and chips and woodland wanders perfect for wildlife watching have been absolute highlights.

On the other hand... trying to remain focused and creative with an eclectic soundtrack of toddler and baby classics has me reaching for the sound blockers. There's the *I've just trodden on a bee* symphony and then the hardcore screamer hit *I'm tired but I'm refusing to sleep*; all perfectly pitched to make working from home feel more like a mosh pit than a melody. But one thing is for sure, picking up the proverbial pen again brings such a comforting feeling of being back in the loop. Un-isolated during isolation...if you will.

I've been in awe of the wonderful attitude around Hampshire to 'keeping calm and carrying on'. From the local food producers that have turned from gin to gel (of the sanitised kind), to the independent boutiques using the time to start up online. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. I've chatted to new business start-ups, interior and garden designers who have never been busier and events organisers



Editor Elizabeth Kirby has enjoyed exploring her local area during lockdown

who are grabbing the virtual bull by the horns.

I'm also so struck with the surge of community spirit. Here in my bubble, neighbours have rallied round and local groups have been buzzing with help on offer and kind words, but to get stuck back in again to all that is Hampshire Life has opened my eyes to the community of the whole county. We're all at it, and it's marvellous. Whether it's farm shops delivering goods to vulnerable customers in the New Forest or thriving businesses sharing their success by donating to charities in need; I can't help but feel like Hampshire is wrapped up in a huge hug.

I am so honoured to return to a role which enables me to shout about all the fabulous things

going on in the county, and if anything is going to keep me at my desk while *Crazy Kids The Album* blares out downstairs then it's the pages of this wonderful little magazine.

Thank you Hampshire for carrying on regardless, and to Duncan and the Hampshire Life team for your dedication over the past year and a bit. Now I'm ready to amp it up and really blare out all that is great about our patch. Let's get this party started! 🐷

#ThereWithYou



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You can follow us on Twitter
[@hampshirlife](https://twitter.com/hampshirlife)

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Steve Roberts

Introducing our newest contributor, Steve will be bringing a series on Hampshire Greats to our pages, starting with the author Olivia Manning.



Richard Holledge

Journalist, Richard takes us back in time to commemorate 400 years since the Mayflower set sail with stories from Hampshire's pilgrims.



Sandra Smith

Awestruck by Jessie Keane's latest book, *The Knock*, Sandra was keen to hear about her life growing up as a Romany Gypsy in Winchester.

INSIDE

Hampshire really is the best place to live, here's all the reasons to love July



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Wild and Free

By Viv Micklefield

During lockdown, Hampshire's wild areas have truly been taken over by nature. Viv Micklefield revisits new reserve Bartley Heath to discover the species that have made it their home over the past year.

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Time with the Trees

By Natalie French

The Japanese art of Shinrin-Yoku or 'forest bathing' has never been more prevalent than during lockdown. Natalie meets some local practitioners to discover why time with the trees is good for the soul.

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Written in the Stars

By Sandra Smith

Virtually meeting her literary icon was a moment for Sandra this month as she chatted to author Jessie Keane about her latest novel and her life growing up as a Romany Gypsy in Winchester.

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A Whole New World

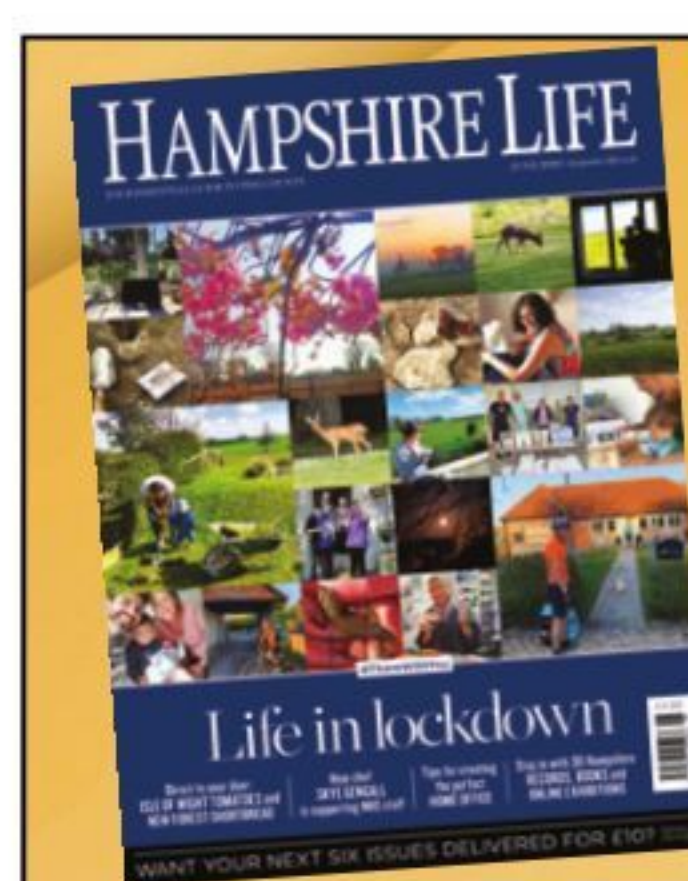
By Richard Holledge

This month marks 400 years since the iconic Mayflower docked in Southampton with its pilgrim passengers hopeful for a new life in America. Richard shares the stories of the Hampshire locals on board.



On the cover:

Wild red poppies growing in a field in Hampshire signify the freedom our wildlife has enjoyed during lockdown. Photographed by Paul Biggins



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6 ISSUES

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Waste to Wellbeing

By Elizabeth Kirby

Starting a business in lockdown is no mean feat, but Jina Carnelley remained unfazed when she launched Downward Duck, selling colourful yoga blocks made from recycled flip flops.



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Hampshire Great

By Steve Roberts

All the best people are born in Hampshire, right? Steve Roberts kicks off this brand new series by exploring *Fortunes of War* author Olivia Manning's connections to Portsmouth.



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Nature's Pioneer

By Tony Joisce

300 years ago, a man named Gilbert White was born in the little village of Selborne. Little did they know then that this man would turn out to be the first ever ecologist; changing the way we view the natural world forever.



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A Timeless Flight

By Malcolm Triggs

As we mark 80 years since the Battle of Britain, Malcolm pays tribute by remembering the Hampshire 'Few'; the Spitfire pilots who we now know gave their lives to save others.



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Hampshire based Interior & Gift Emporium, La Di Da Interiors are supporting their self-isolating customers with a range of services, including Personal Shopping and online Furniture Make-Over Masterclasses. Most are free and others have kits available to purchase which can be delivered to your doorstep. Visit ladida-andover.com

The River Test Distillery, Winner of 'England's BEST London Dry Gin', have been using their facilities and knowledge to create and donate hand sanitiser to Hovertravel for use by its staff and the key workers using its critical community service; as well as other frontline workers in Hampshire including the air ambulance. Now that's a true community spirit!

Romsey based Eflorist, has raised a massive £311,000 for NHS Charities Together by donating £1 from each order they receive to the fund. Customers were also being given the option to donate and nominate an NHS hero to receive a surprise bouquet of flowers. NHS Charities Together is a collective experience representing, supporting and championing the work of the NHS' official charities. NHS Charities give £1million a day to the NHS, providing vital funds to help the NHS to do more. The fund will remain open for those still wishing to make a donation via justgiving.com/fundraising/efloristuk



iStock/Getty Images Plus/Esolia

Insider's guide

News and happenings from across the county

BEST FOR BOATS



How Swanwick Marina will look in the future

An exciting new planning application has been passed at Premier Swanwick Marina for a Pavillion building to house boat sales and marine businesses along with a new food, beverage and facilities building.

The approved planning also includes a new bridgehead entrance structure, additional car parking and trolley storage at the marina.

These landside developments follow

the recent completion of Swanwick's new £4m floating marina which now offers 333 berths. General Manager, Graham Bristowe is pleased to receive the go ahead to continue with the land development saying, "In these most testing times, this is great news for Swanwick Marina. We know that our tenants and berth holders alike will be happy to see the continued investment on their site."

SAILORS ON TWO WHEELS

Disabled athlete Mike Wood is looking for 1000 wheelchair users for a Trans-World Sailing Adventure to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his charity, The Disabled Sailors Association.

The voyage, on board the charity's £4.5 million wheelchair accessible super yacht, will be split in to one to six week sections and will be heavily subsidised so as to be affordable to those on low incomes.

Gosport based Mike says, "Over the last 25 years we have designed and built some very good, completely wheelchair accessible yachts and sailed them all over Europe from Sweden to Turkey. This Round the World Adventure is just an extension of things we have done on a fairly regular basis."

Mike is now looking for proof of demand to enable the charity to apply for the funding it needs to get the project off the ground; and is putting together a database of all those who would be interested in being involved.

To find out more and express your interest visit disabledsailing.org

TWEETS TO FOLLOW

Jessie Keane @realjessiekeane:

Finished The Knock! Cheering on The Edge! And cursing the a***hole who hacked my bank account! Careful out there folks! #theedge

Adore Your Outdoors

@AdoreYrOutdoors: For #StressAwarenessMonth I recorded a guided sensory meditation that I usually do at the start of one of my #forestbathing sessions. You can do in your gardens to relieve anxiety and stress during #coronavirus

Hants and IOW Wildlife Trust

@HantsIOWWildlife: Cleaning up the Solent with a natural solution - our scheme to reduce pollution and bring #wildlife back



Hovertravel

Lorry Middleton is a Tourism Superstar

A sunny disposition

When it comes to brightening up your day, Hovertravel's Lorry Middleton is often quoted as the perfect tonic. Now it's official, as he has won the Visit England/The Mirror Tourism Superstar 2020.

Hovercraft Handling Agent, Lorry, has been topping the polls since voting started back in March and throughout the current climate, people have continued to put their support behind the Hovertravel favourite.

Nominated by Visit Isle of Wight in the nationwide search, Lorry saw off tough

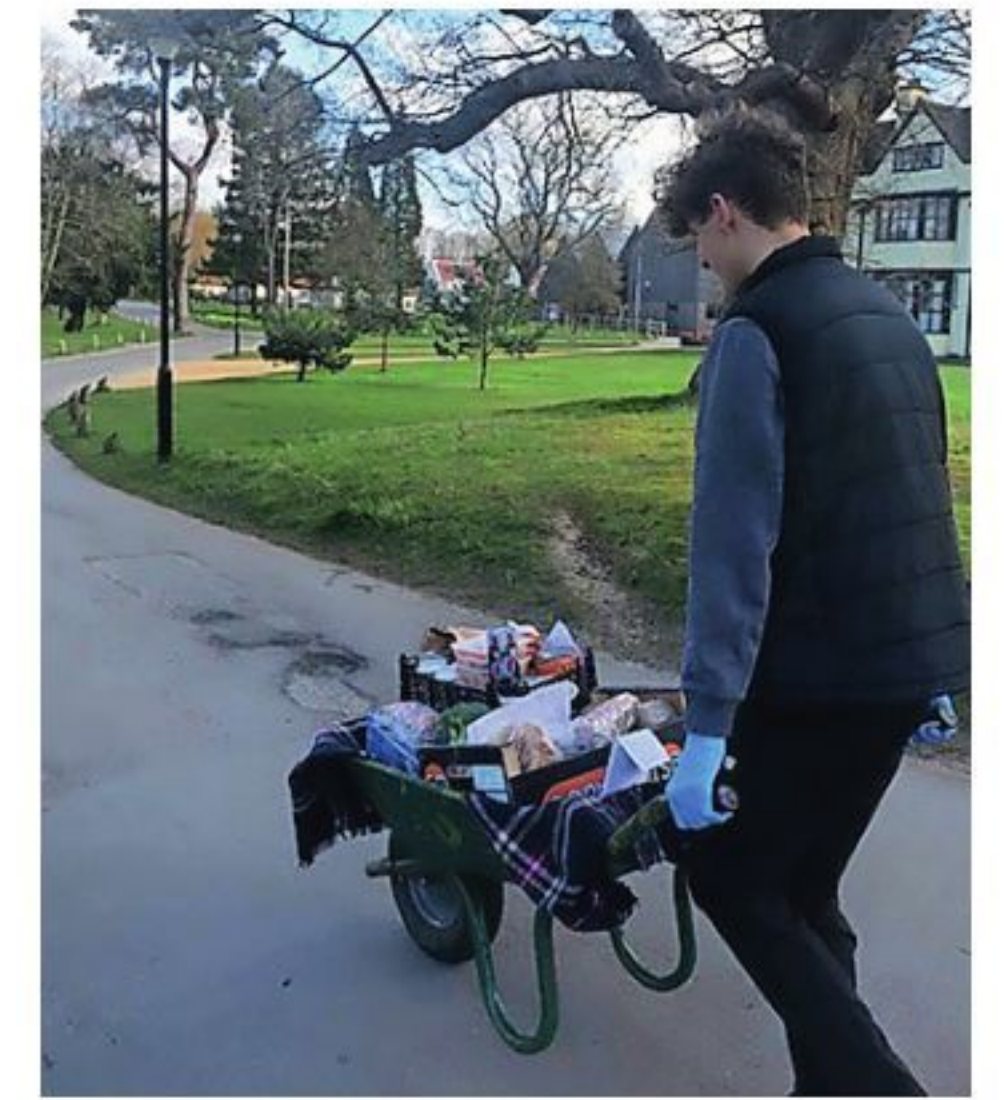
competition from nine other finalists across England to be crowned the winner, taking an incredible 32% of the vote.

Even though the Coronavirus pandemic has seen a change to the normal pattern of work for Lorry, it hasn't changed his sunny outlook one bit, and he was thrilled to hear that he had been named the nation's favourite saying, "I am overwhelmed by the support and love people across the country have shown – thank you to everyone who voted."



OPEN DOORS

The fairies of Furzey Gardens are over the moon with their new rainbow fairy hospital door after seven-year-old Evelyn Nicol won an online competition set by the Gardens to design a new door for their famous collection. New Forest based Furzey has recently reopened following their closure due to the coronavirus outbreak, and once again visitors can explore the new doors for themselves. Visit minsteadtrust.org.uk/furzey-gardens



New forest marque

THRIVING IN THE FOREST

Despite lockdown, businesses in The New Forest have amazed the New Forest Marque by diversifying and reworking their business models to continue to supply customers with their products. Out of the 160 members, more than half adapted their services and continued to trade; with many offering delivery services, online ordering and take-away, which has become a lifeline for the elderly and vulnerable in their communities.

Claire Lee, New Forest Marque Operations Manager, said: "There's a tremendous effort going on out there. So many people are working hard to support each other as well as local businesses and the community."

Elsewhere in the Forest, mills are working all hours producing much-needed flour, which the rangers are delivering to farm shops. Gin suppliers are switching their production to antibacterial hand gel and despite having to close their doors, some hotels and guest houses are offering accommodation to NHS staff.

Claire added, "I'm amazed at the interesting ways people are adapting their businesses, supporting the community and helping people to stay at home."

Details of all New Forest producers and suppliers can be found at newforestmarque.co.uk

BACK IN BUSINESS

Now that our waterways are open for enjoyment, Swanwick Marina is celebrating the opening of The Paddle Centre; a brand new facility offering SUP and kayak hire for visitors to enjoy the beauty of the Hamble River. As well as 'pay and play' options, there will also be sunset excursions, safaris and SUP yoga as and when restrictions allow; plus taster lessons and tuition.

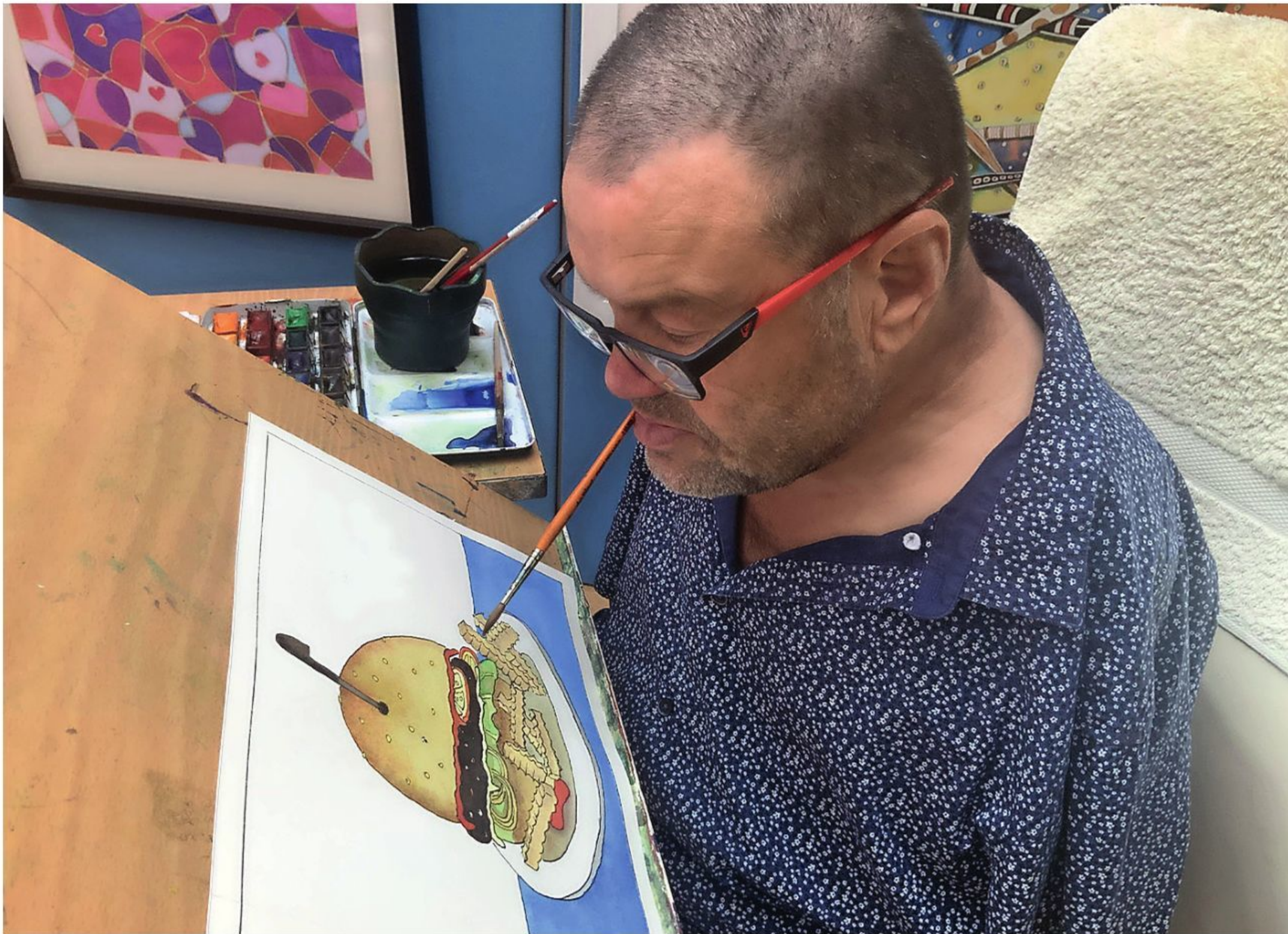
Thepaddlecentre.co.uk

All NGS gardens are now open just in time for everyone to enjoy the summer blooms. Visitors are being asked to pre-purchase their tickets online at **ngs.org.uk** and unfortunately refreshments will not yet be served. In larger gardens, picnics are permitted so check before you leave.

Andover garden designer, Robert Day, has launched a new business during lockdown to provide an easy, fun and environmentally friendly way of creating beautiful gardens, with a 'Pop & Grow' box delivery service. The biodegradable boxes are complete with plants and open out to form a template on the soil, showing where the plants need to be. Boxes are available for £145 from **popandgrow.com**



Pop & Grow garden in a box



Tasty art

If you're craving a way to get creative at home, Hampshire artist Tom Yendell is here to help with his inspiring art tutorials. A member of the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists - an association of artists who paint with their mouth and feet due to physical disability, Tom is passionate about helping people to get painting. You can join Tom online at **mfpa.uk** as he leads you through his step-by-step tutorial, teaching how to draw and paint a burger design using just your mouth. He has also provided a burger template so that the whole family can enjoy taking part. Tasty!

BEST FRIENDS

Dogs for Autism, a Hampshire based charity, has launched their first Crowdfunding campaign to raise £5000 towards their work training assistance dogs for autistic people. The charity's entire fundraising plans for the year have had to be cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, and they are now looking at new ways to raise money. The £5000 they hope to raise will be used to support their current families, whose challenges with autism have been increased during the pandemic. Dogs for Autism are offering some great rewards through their Crowdfunding campaign, ranging from a 'high five', a DfA T-shirt, regular 'pupdates', a visit to HQ – and even a visit from their dogs to your office. Visit **avivacommunityfund.co.uk/dogsforautism** to pledge your support.



Hugo and Isobel

Contact: **elizabeth.kirby@archant.co.uk**

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North east Hampshire might not be the first place which springs to mind when thinking of basking reptiles, rare marsh flora and fauna, and a chorus of birdsong to make the heart sing. Yet Hook Common and the adjoining Bartley Heath nature reserve has all these and more. Demonstrating that even in semi-rural areas - and here we're talking greenbelt being gobbled-up for development and major transport networks on the doorstep - if the habitat is right, then some of our most beloved wildlife will make it their home.

During the summer months lizards and Great Crested Newts are among those soaking-up the rays; Marsh Gentian with their blue, trumpet-shaped flowers burst into bloom; fleeting flashes of brilliant colour signal Purple Emperor butterflies feeding among the treetops as

'A designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, open heathland and ancient woodland pasture which once dominated much of the county, continues to be carefully preserved despite 21st century pressures'

squadrons of dragonflies swoop over rippling pools; whilst as dusk falls, the drumming of the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker is supplanted by the Nightjar's distinctive churring filling the air.

The 123 hectare reserve is today managed by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT). A designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, open heathland and ancient woodland pasture which once dominated much of the county, continues to be carefully preserved despite 21st century pressures. And along with grassland, and wetland areas created from flooded former gravel pits, these provide ample opportunities for those get-away-from-it-all moments of relaxation or nature spotting. As we all spend much more time in our own, private green spaces we can take inspiration from sites such as Hook Common and Bartley Heath and entice some new species into our own gardens.

WILD



and FREE

Staying at home has meant the natural world has reasserted its presence. As more of us celebrate the pleasure this brings, VIV MICKLEFIELD takes inspiration from one Hampshire reserve



The Nightjar's distinctive churring fills the air at Bartley Heath

BRING BACK THE BUTTERFLIES

By providing food for caterpillars and nectar-rich plants for butterflies, a colourful fluttering will soon find its way into your green spaces. A flower border sown with cottage garden favourites such as Nasturtium attracts the Green-veined White, and Honesty the Orange-tip. It's also worth letting a few weeds grow-up, such as nettles for the Peacock and the Small Tortoiseshell, or, a patch of thistles for the Painted Lady. And don't be too hasty to hack back ivy; as well as attracting the Holly Blue, it also provides somewhere for many different caterpillars and butterflies to overwinter.

WATERY WORLDS

Even a small pond can become a home to damsel and dragonflies, frogs and newts, as well as providing a feeding ground for natural predators including birds, hedgehogs and bats. Any old container, from a washing-up bowl to a large plant pot, or disused sink, can be repurposed. Your pond will want light, but not full sunlight all day, and can either be sunk into a hole in the ground, or left sitting on top. If the container isn't watertight, then add a piece of pond liner. Add a layer of gravel and rocks, then use logs or stones to create a range of depths and a slope for creatures to climb in and out. If your container isn't sunk-in, place a ramp from the ground outside. Fill your pond ideally with rainwater, followed by a miniature water lily such as *Nymphaea* "Pygmaea Helvola" (water depth 10-30cm), or a flowering rush such as *Butomus umbellatus* (water depth 5-15cm), and a submerged plant such as Hornwort.

If there's space for a bigger, sunken pond this can become one of the single best features for attracting wildlife into a garden.

REPTILE (AND AMPHIBIAN) RETREAT

Frogs, toads, lizards and grass snakes may already have discovered your garden, especially if there's a pond or compost heap. So creating a hibernaculum for them to safely shelter through the winter





A marsh gentian

chills will see many emerge the following year. First find a sunny spot before digging a hole, roughly 50cm deep and 1.5m wide, using a spade. Pile this hole full of pile of logs, branches, bricks and rocks, leaving lots of gaps in-between. Insert entrance tubes such as short lengths of drainpipe at ground level covering the pile with soil to around 50cm high. Meadow flower seeds or long grasses planted over the mound will attract pollinating insects.

Fact sheets for all these wildlife friendly projects, plus lots of other ideas, including making a bird box and attracting more bees into your garden, can be found at hiwwt.org.uk/actions.  **The Wildlife Trusts and the Royal Horticultural Society has also launched a campaign to encourage us to act for nature. For details go to wildaboutgardens.org.uk**



Alan Price

A common toad under a lily pad

PRESERVING THE NATURAL WORLD

Ensuring that our most precious landscapes continue to survive for future generations, still reflects long-standing traditions, as HIWWT assistant reserve officer, Guy Mason explains.

Q. Why are rare breed cattle and New Forest and Exmoor ponies encouraged to graze on heathland?

A. Conservation grazing plays a key role in maintaining

rare habitats by controlling aggressive species which would otherwise dominate areas through scrub encroachment.

When livestock are allowed to graze freely, they can pick and choose what and where they eat. This creates a mix of different conditions benefiting a wide range of wildlife. Cattle eating the grass will leave behind them tussocks of differing heights and structures; the

ideal habitat for small mammals and insects. Ponies will often browse the tougher, woodier vegetation. And light poaching of the ground by grazing animals allows wildflower seeds to germinate providing a home and hunting ground for warmth-loving invertebrates and reptiles. And let's not forget the wonders of cattle dung – over 200 insects and invertebrates are associated with it!

Q. Which traditional woodland crafts are still carried out?

A. Coppicing, is one of our main conservation tools and is practised on ancient woodland sites as it encourages new regrowth at different stages of regeneration, this provides structural diversity and habitats for both woodland flora and fauna to thrive in.

We still use, maintain and create rides and ditches within



White park cattle amongst Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* at Hook Common



The Nuthatch is a welcome sight



Silver washed fritillary pamber

our woodlands, the rides are used to transport materials from the site, and the open habitat they provide introduces greater habitat diversity – the ditches encourage a fantastic array of insects, invertebrates and amphibians.

Hedge laying is also practised in our ancient woodlands. This craft has been practised for hundreds of years creating a vitally important refuge and

source of food for wildlife, as well as wildlife corridors connecting large parts of the landscape.

Q. Is it too late to turn back the clock for some natural landscapes?

A. Our flower-rich grasslands have declined by 98 per cent in the last century, and some of the main threats to habitat decline include agricultural

intensification and pesticides. However, it's never too late, and our farm advisors help farmers to deliver environmental improvements to their land.

Our heathlands, grasslands and waterlogged mires are maintained by grazing and vegetation clearance. Opening up these habitats are incredibly important for insects, invertebrates and breeding populations of Nightjar and

Woodlark, not to mention homes for species like Marsh Gentian.

Monitoring is incredibly important, the state of nature as we know it now is built upon records kept since the 1970s. This allows us to focus our efforts where they are needed the most, and to record change and importantly, success.



Species you've snapped

This month our instagram @hampshirelifemagazine has been full of the wonderful wildlife that has made our dear county their home during lockdown. Here are just a few of our favourites

[#ThereWithYou](#)

NECTAR COLLECTOR

“Walking around the grounds of Chawton House it feels like a dream. Normally busy with activity but at the moment it is waiting in silent anticipation for the return of visitors. In the garden you can lose yourself in the vibrant colours of the flowers and the fabulous smell of the roses, but during lockdown I have been able to focus on animals and insects that have become our visitors. The birds seem louder, squirrels, rabbits and deer seem to be braver, and the bumblebees have come out in abundance.”

Claire Lewis, Chawton, clairelewisphotography.co.uk, [@clairelewisphotographymua](https://www.instagram.com/clairelewisphotographymua)

DAMSELS AND DRAGONS

“For myself, lockdown has given me more time to reconnect with the wildlife on my doorstep. During this time, it also feels like mother nature has breathed a sigh of relief. Wildflowers have flourished, creating a rich and beautiful source of nectar and habitat for pollinating insects such as moths, butterflies and bees. Dragonflies and damselflies seem to have increased in numbers and diversity in a way I’d not seen in previous years, which in turn has gradually encouraged birds and the more timid mammals out into the open. Living in Basingstoke I’ve been lucky enough to never be too far away from nature, something I’ve always had a childlike passion for and fortunately all I’ve needed is time, a camera and a bit of luck to enjoy it.”

Gary Laundy, [@GaryLaundy](https://www.instagram.com/GaryLaundy)





PURE SHORES

“Upon my daily walk during the lockdown period, nature and wildlife seem to be a lot more active. Less people outside is showing just how beautiful Southsea, and other areas, can be, especially at sunset. The

clearer waters are bringing in more aquatic wildlife and nature onto the shores of Southsea, creating mesmerising colours under the golden sunsets. Low tides in the evening are beautiful because of how far you can walk out and unearth some parts

of the seafront you’ve never seen before. With limited people patrolling the area, wildlife and nature are immediately become something so peaceful and incredible to witness.”
Lewis Jefferies, Southsea
@lewiisjefferies

A DAY ON THE BEACH

“A city dweller, I am often mesmerised by the scenes one so often observes in the countryside, and this spring has made the experience even more acute. We came across this wild beach on a whim whilst driving home from Beaulieu, and I thought the cows happily taking in the seaside was a majestic sight, especially as humankind is going through such high levels of anxiety and stress.”

Maria Ivy @blogthehungrylens



PEEK-A-BOO

“This photo was taken at The Peoples Memorial at Langstone Harbour in Portsmouth. I hadn’t come across the memorial until lockdown and my sister recommended the location as something different for a daily walk. One feature of the memorial is the white doves living in birdhouses overlooking it. I managed to capture this photo of them popping their head out of their home to see

who was visiting. I imagine they hadn’t received many visitors over the last few weeks! During lockdown it was lovely to see animals undisturbed, able to enjoy their natural habitats. I particularly enjoyed seeing images of animals on social media moving into urban spaces in the absence of man.”

Rhiannon Sievwright,
Portsmouth,
photogenicpompey.com
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MEON VALLEY MAN

Chris van Schaick is a writing coach and former BBC journalist with his own unique take on life in Hampshire

Reports reaching me from Brockenhurst say they've been reduced to eating tinned octopus on toast during the crisis.

That Hampshire village is a wonderful place. I lived there for seven years while my father was headmaster of the primary school and I had great times at the sixth form college.

But the o-on-t lockdown lunch was very Brockenhurst in its charming eccentricity. For our friends Fiona and Neil, the next grocery consignment was a few days away. So they had a rummage at the back of the cupboard and there it was – tinned octopus. Who knew? And how would Delia suggest serving it? Well, that bread's getting a bit old. What about putting the octopus on some toast?

My last visit to a supermarket was in March – at the empty shelves stage. It was noticeable then, that even in people's desperation, there were some things they weren't quite prepared to buy. Next to an empty shelf where the canned tuna should have been, there were copious tins of its fishy cousin, the unpromisingly named sild. Even as people grabbed desperately for store cupboard standbys, nobody seemed to want the sild. Which is a shame because sild – young herring – is good for you, I'm told. Perhaps it needs a re-brand.

During the trying events of this spring and summer, some people have gone hungry and we shouldn't forget that. But for those of us fortunate enough to have been well-provisioned in the past few months, I suspect our relationship with food has subtly changed – and for the better. Meals at our house are now better planned and therefore more nutritious. Also, I think the threat of scarcity has made us a bit more thoughtful about what we eat.

Another welcome change is that my own community of Soberton, population 1600, now has its own village baker. My pal Jeremy was beginning to wonder about his life of freelance corporate flitting about. So he

took the crisis as a prompt to scale up into a micro business one of his hobbies – baking sourdough loaves. He's been churning out bread and delicious buns from his domestic oven and delivering them by bike across a two mile radius. Borderlands Bakehouse is the name, since you ask, and yes he's done his food hygiene training.

My own attempts of self-sufficiency are puny by comparison. But back in the spring I did have a spell of panic gardening – hastily digging a potato patch and acquiring, via mail-order – a decent sized trug to grow some salad, courgette

'During the trying events of this spring and summer, some people have gone hungry and we shouldn't forget that'

and onion. I'm not in Margot's league. But it's a start.

Meanwhile, the village store at Meonstoke and the people who run it have been magnificent. The Lilliputian dimensions of the shop would have made social distancing inside quite impossible. So they switched swiftly into email and collect mode in a way that's been a wonder to behold. They may not have the benefit of Amazon algorithms. But in the smooth-as-silk way they've boxed up our goodies for collection, you'd never know. 🐙

🐙 @hampshirelife
(using #MeonMan)



Stock/Getty Images Plus/Chameleonseye

Octopus toast

When it comes to food in lockdown, Chris has been surprised by some of his friends' inventions

A different perspective

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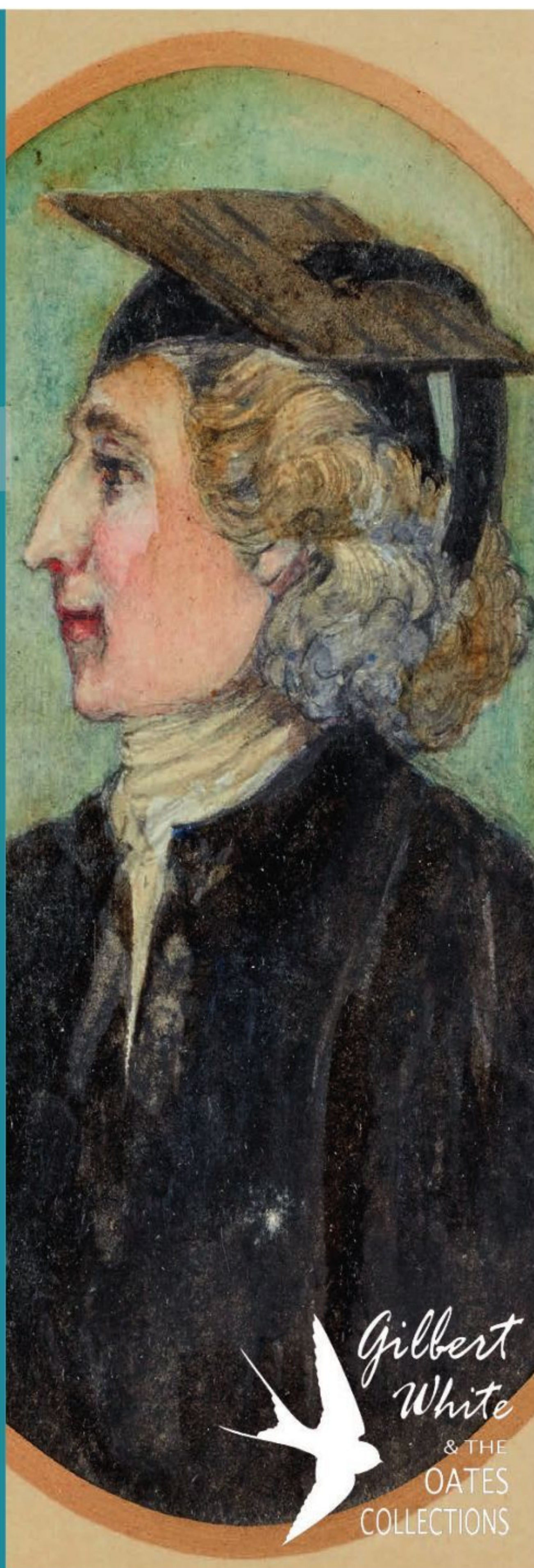
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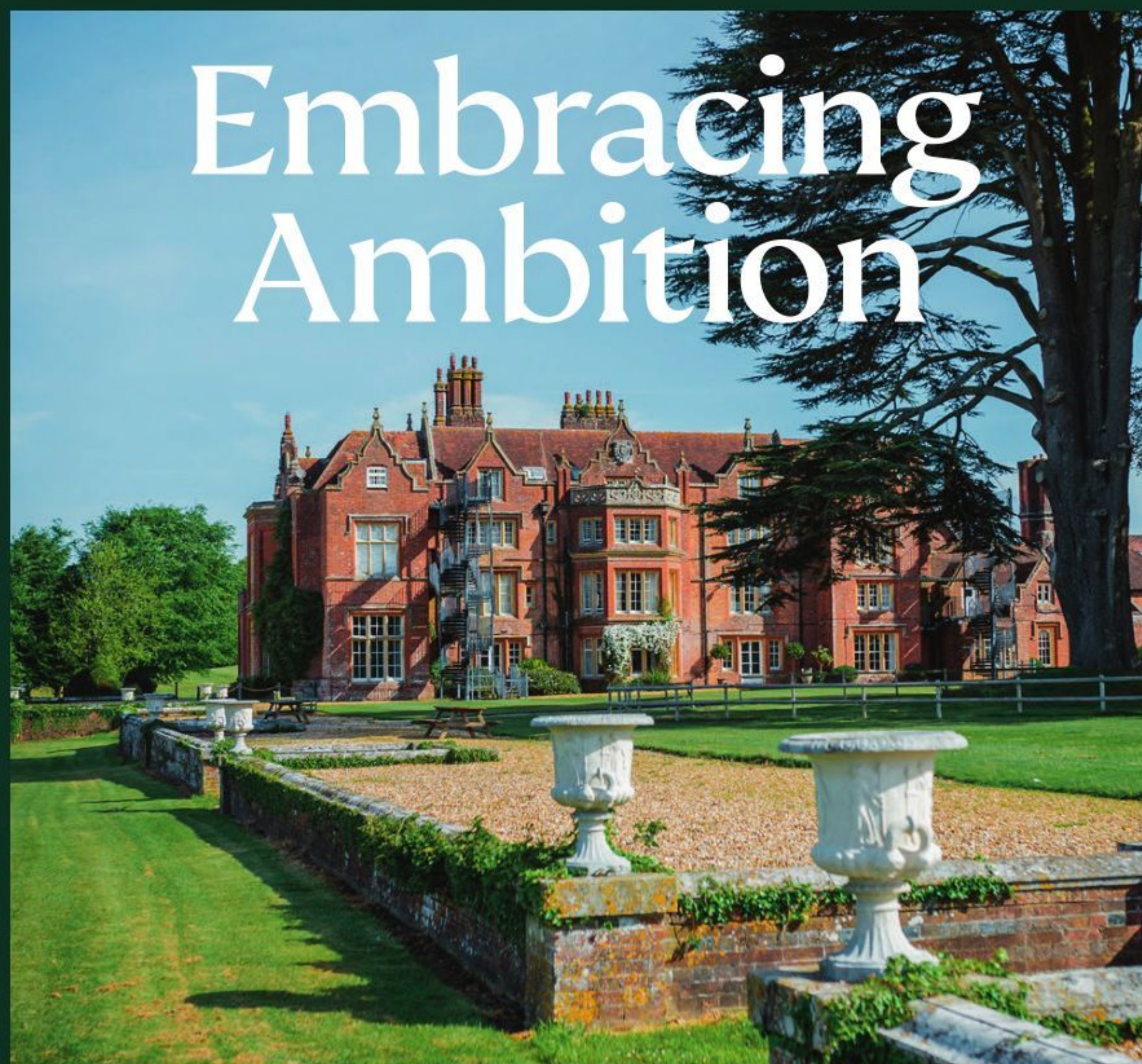
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The great school debate. Should you or shouldn't you send your child back; to pretend that children are capable of social distancing. (Newsflash – they're not. They are children.)

The truth is I don't know the right answer and neither do you. There are contentious (and valid) points to be made from both sides of the (heavily sanitised) school gate. Just last month Pennington Infant School in the New Forest had to close (having reopened), following a confirmed case. Is this a taste of things to come?

A spokesperson for Hampshire County Council said of the incident: "We are aware that a pupil at Pennington Infant School has tested positive for Covid-19. Public Health England has liaised with the school and, having carried out a detailed risk assessment, has advised the school that only those in the pupil's school 'bubble' need to self-isolate for 14 days. In view of this guidance, the headteacher plans to open again for children in the rest of the school."

Over the past three months, vulnerable children and sons and daughters of key workers have still been able to attend school. All pupils in reception, year one and year six were then strongly encouraged to go back to school at the beginning of June. Plans to extend this further chopped and changed, but at the time of going to press looked doubtful. Will children all be back at school in September? Who knows.

But what is the right thing to do right now? What of exams? Results? Social interaction and much-needed breathing and headspace for frazzled parents?

Every child has the right to be protected from danger. Would you send your child to school if there was a chance they could catch meningitis or measles? Of course you wouldn't. So why would you want to risk your child's life by possibly facilitating the catching of a killer disease that there is no vaccine for and we know very little about?

Also – your child has the

advantage of a one-on-one tutor (you). You can work to a flexible schedule, you can go all extra-curricular and teach them all manner of things you've never had the time or impetus to do before, and you can bond in a safe and secure environment (your home).

I was laughing to myself writing that paragraph. What a load of pie in the sky. Where are these saintly children that make such things possible and where do I get one? I am no teacher, and chances are, neither are you.

Children cannot be expected to learn effectively when being taught by their parents at home. And home schooling is hard. Really hard. Children returned home at the beginning of lockdown laden with homework packs or, in some cases, full online timetables. And many parents still had to work from home alongside relearning their eight times tables, attending Joe Wicks' fitness classes and quelling tantrums.

The fact is whatever some of us may have been telling ourselves during the past few weeks of

'But what is the right thing to do right now? What of exams? Results? Social interaction and much-needed breathing and headspace for frazzled parents?'

home schooling, parents haven't been doing what teachers do. We've dealt with a brace of children at best, not an entire class. Not that we were supposed to – this has been an emergency, not some bizarre competitive parenting contest – but still, it does make you wonder how on earth they do it.

But which of these is the stronger argument? Send them back lest their education be permanently dented by inadequate parental substitution? Or keep them home to save them, you and your entire household from an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19?

Where even is the moral high ground? Is there one? Who is right? What is the correct thing to do? Frankly, goodness only knows. What I do know is that sadly, whichever path you choose as a parent, there will be someone waiting to tell you that you're wrong.

There is no right way, there is only your way. Make it work and muddle through because whatever you choose to do, you're not wrong. 🐷



iStock/Getty Images Plus/Fam Veld

Schools of thought

Is your child being treated like a guinea pig? Sent back to school to catch and spread the virus? Or is it time you stopped teaching fractions in your kitchen?

Do you have an opinion on this story? Email the editor on elizabeth.kirby@archant.co.uk to see your views in print

NATURE'S PIONEER





300 years ago a man was
born in Selborne who was
destined to shape our
views of the natural world...
we celebrate Gilbert White

WORDS: Tony Joice

Widely regarded as ‘the father of ecology’, Gilbert White is known for one of the most famous books on natural history: *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*. Published in 1789 the work has acquired popularity and respect from both the general public and other nature writers and scientists, and has never been out of print; having gone through 300 editions. After the Bible, *Pilgrim’s Progress* and Shakespeare it is reputedly the most published book in the English Language. It’s even available as an E-book on Amazon Kindle! Richard Mabey, the popular and esteemed nature writer, and biographer of Gilbert White has said that “Gilbert White’s book, more than any other has shaped our every-day view of relations between humans and nature.”

Born in the Vicarage of Selborne on July 18 1720, where his Grandfather (also Gilbert White) was the vicar. He moved to the house known as ‘The Wakes’, upon the death of Gilbert White Snr.

He had a great passion for gardening, which he satisfied by the cultivation of the land at the property, and gradually extended until it covered the 25 acres that ‘The Wakes’ now holds. His plantings were ambitious to say the least, with 500 Savoy cabbages being included at one time. There were also more exotic plants that were favourites among gardeners of the eighteenth century, such as melons



An illustration of Selborne by S.H. Grimm, the original illustrator for Gilbert White’s books



Internet Archive Book Images

and cucumbers, and he was the first person in the area to grow potatoes. As well to do gentlemen of the time were, he was a diarist; but instead of noting political machinations he kept a journal recording what he planted and harvested, the weather and temperature. This became known as his *Garden Kalendar*.

His record keeping of garden development became a diary of his observations of the wildlife of his native village. This was eventually to become *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* for which he is remembered. He was not as coldly scientific as other naturalists of the time. White blended scientific record keeping with emotional response, and displays of his passion for the life around him; noting observations that many would consider trivial such as the singing of crickets and how flycatchers keep their young cool in the summer by fanning their wings above the nest.

His methods of observation opened up new opportunities for discovery, that simply could not be synthesised in the confines of a study, using dead subjects. Through this approach he found that chiffchaff, willow warbler and wood warbler were three different species by their songs. They had all previously been thought of as the willow wren. He also went on to discover the noctule bat and recorded that owls hoot in B flat!

The observations White made built themselves up into a picture that showed the connection between all life forms. This is why he is often referred to as the first ecologist. Working with a fellow naturalist he recorded the

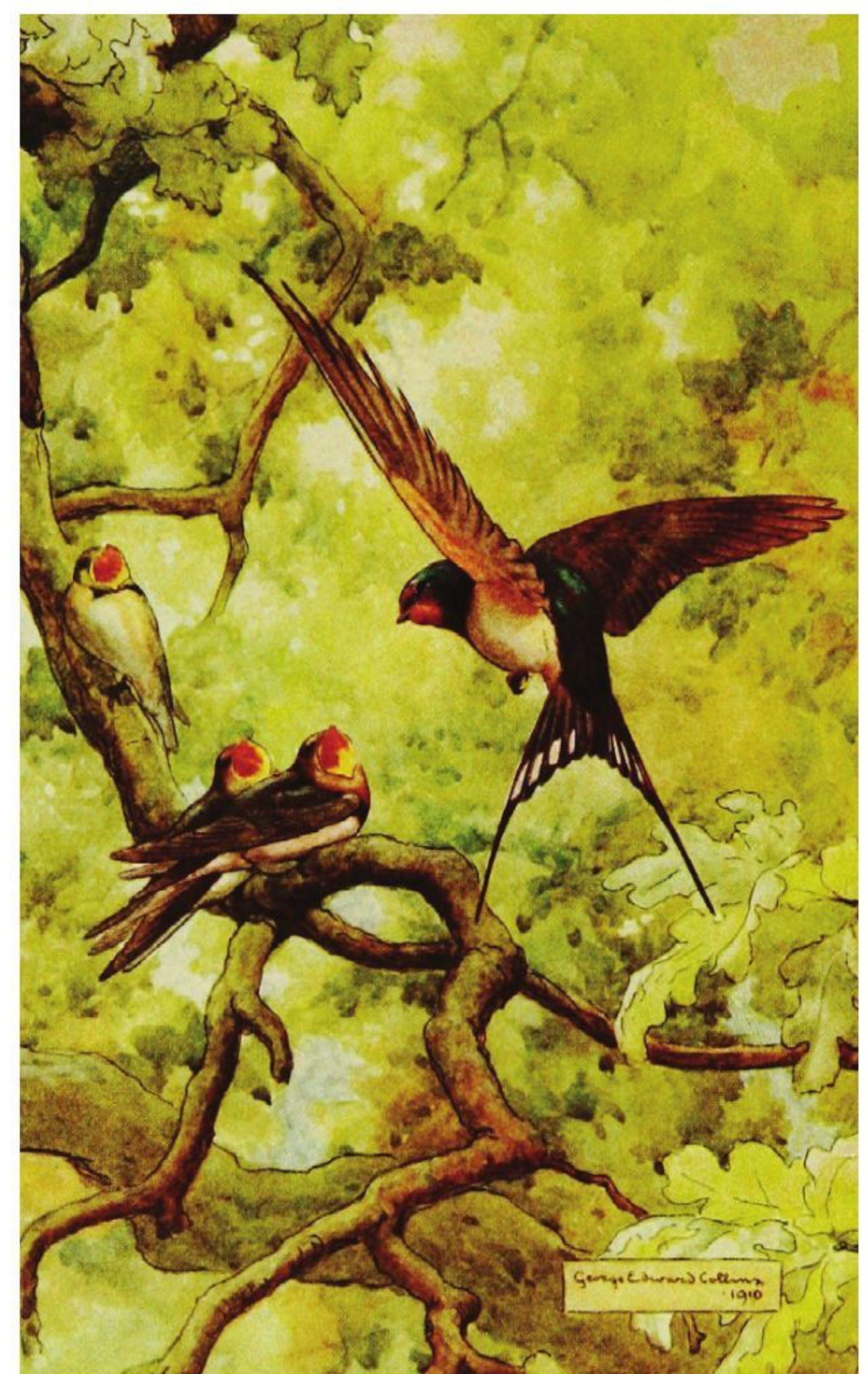
yearly cycle of over 400 species of plants and animals and fostered the idea of the 'food chain'. He was also the first person to carry out a bird census and recognise the patterns of migration.

As may be seen from the survival of the work, it became very popular. One of the reasons for this is the style, structure and accessibility of the book. Rather than a high-browed, dry textbook, it is a personal story. Emigrants to Australia or North America carried the book with them to remind them of who they were and where they came from. Richard Mabey, writes that "the book shows how the British have for a long time regarded their relationship with the countryside as something quite distinctive, a badge of cultural identity."

In times of crisis this country has turned to White's vision of Britain. At the height of the Blitz in 1940, James Fisher wrote that Gilbert White's "world is round and simple and complete; the British country; the perfect escape. No breath of the outside world enters in; no politics, no ambition, no care or cost."

As well as being greatly popular with the general public it has been lauded by various figures in literature and natural history. Coleridge made notes in his book, which he described as "sweet and delightful." Darwin sited it as one of the main contributors to his own interest in biology, claiming that he "stood on the shoulders" of White and that he went on a "pilgrimage" to Selborne in 1857.

The work has value in the modern world too because it was a catalyst in the change of both the study and view of the natural



Internet Archive Book Images

"He was able to take a small localised matter and see its eternal significance. He saw his little chunk of Hampshire as a single living entity"



Credit: Kent Wang

world, it is a unique record of nature in the 18th Century, and has led to many discoveries about the natural world. Even today most naturalists will have read it and refer to it for White's insight. Simon Barnes, writing in the Times in June 2013 said, "The book is about taking small things and understanding their place across the immensities of space and time. He was able to take a small localised matter and see its eternal significance. He saw his little chunk of Hampshire as a single living entity".

Gilbert White had a great passion for outdoor life and he was clearly devoted to his native Selborne, as can be seen in his poem: *The Invitation to Selborne*.

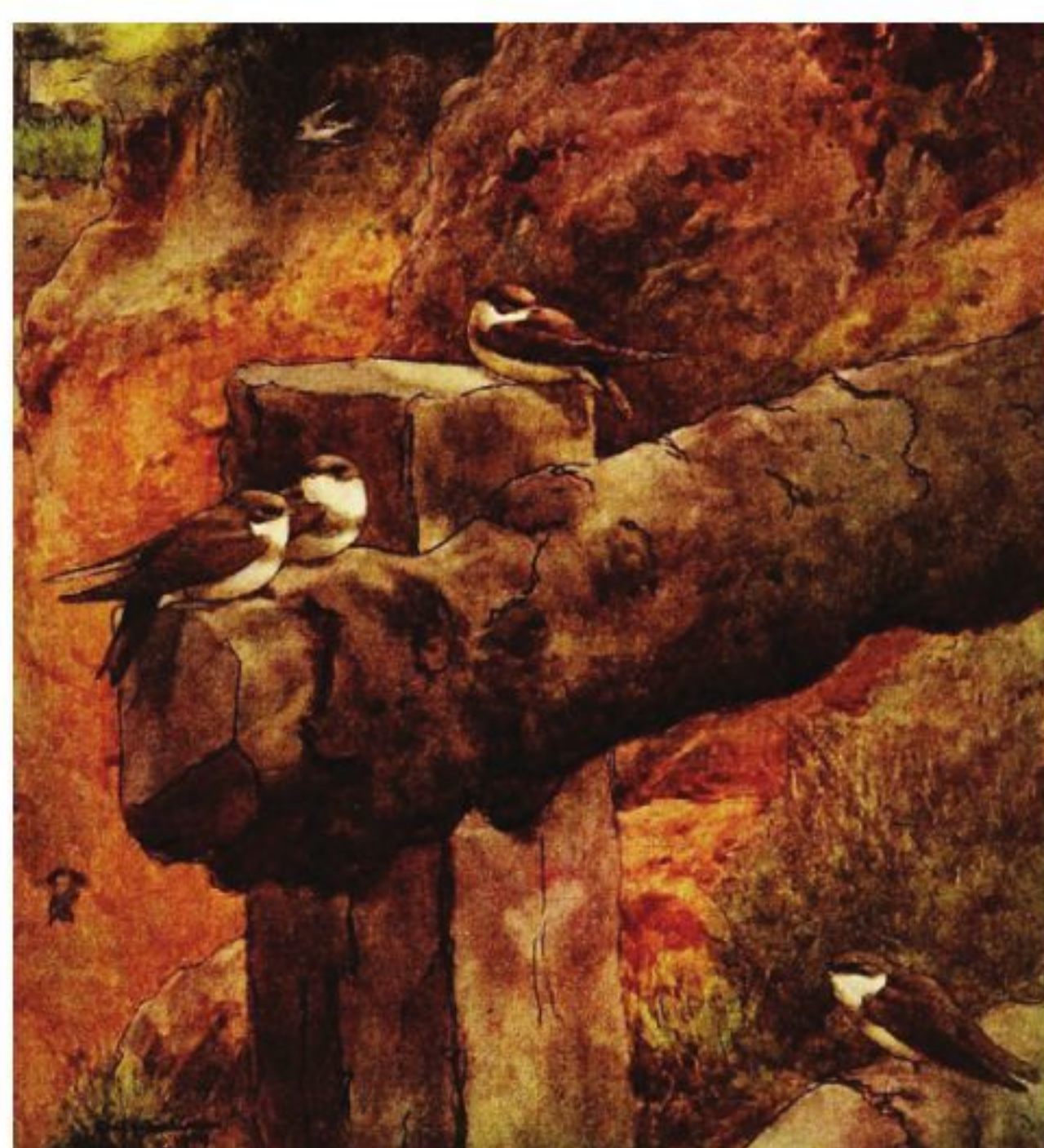
He was popular with the people of his native village, with records from the 19th Century of locals who knew him describing a humble man who disliked "pomp and circumstance."

The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne is an invitation to share in the passion that drove his life's work. This work is preserved today at 'The

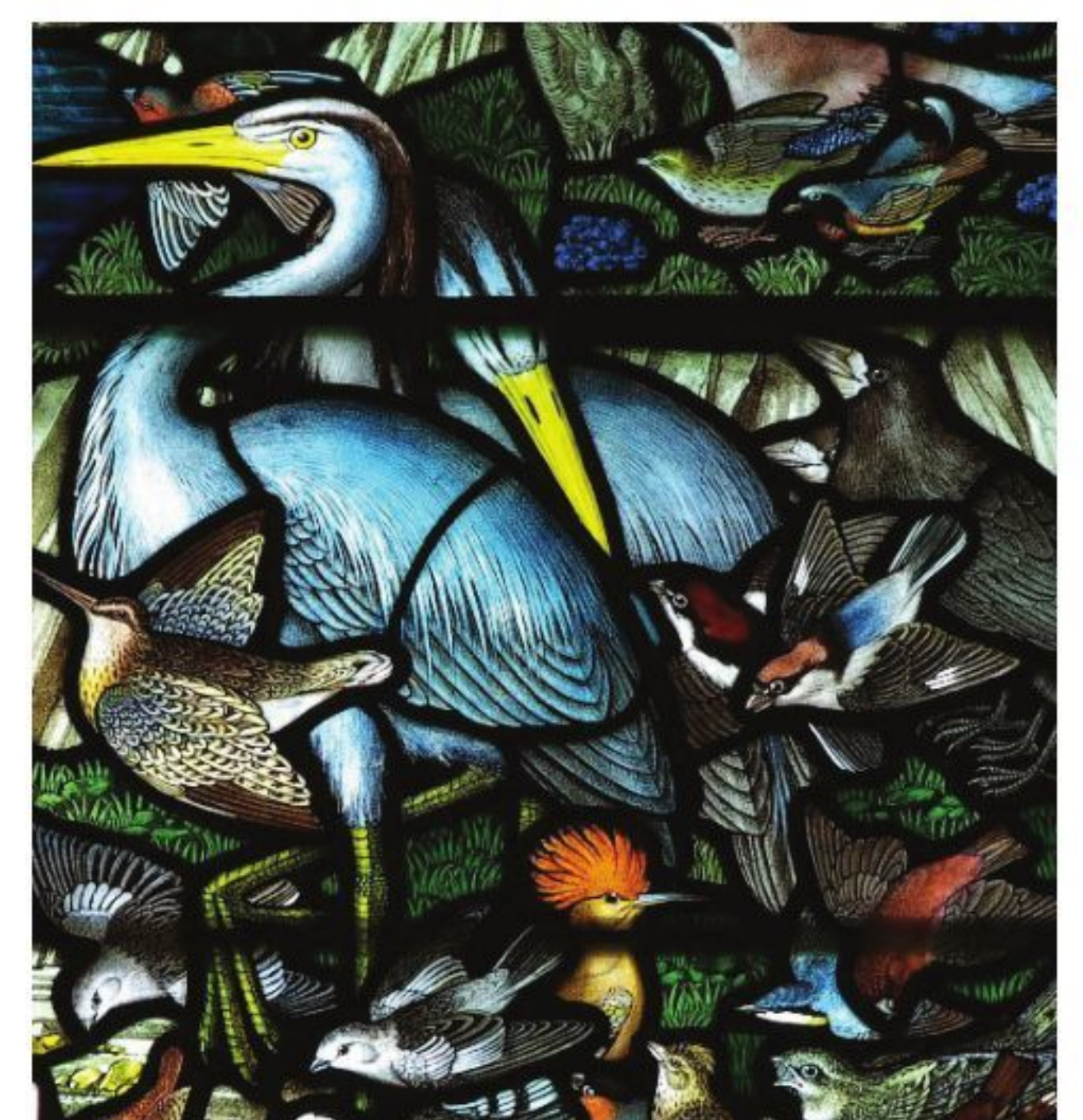
TOP: Gilbert White's House and Gardens in Selborne

LEFT AND RIGHT: Images from *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* depict the wildlife that Gilbert White would have encountered

FAR RIGHT: A memorial window in St Mary's Church in Selborne is dedicated to Gilbert White, and shows all of the birds mentioned in his book



Peter Schluter



Internet Book Archive Images


Wakes', which is now a museum dedicated to Gilbert White. The building stands as it was, and the interior has been preserved to show how White lived. It is also the home of the Oates Collection; the Oates brothers being renowned adventurers.

They also have almost every edition of *The Natural History* and run many events throughout the year. There is a digitised version of the original manuscript at gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk.

The Garden has been restored to how it was in the 18th Century

and nothing is planted that was not present in White's time. They cover five acres with an additional 25 acres of parkland. It has recently qualified for Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship and a survey in summer 2013 found over 100 species on the land, with seven orchids. I'm sure Gilbert White would be honoured, if not a little embarrassed by the 'pomp and circumstance.'

Hampshire Life readers can get 241 entry at Gilbert White's House, see page 31 for details.



Our Hampshire forests are the perfect place to soothe the soul

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Escape lockdown and experience the art of Shinrin-Yoku, forest bathing, to soothe the soul and reset the mind

WORDS: Natalie French

‘Shinrin’ in Japanese means ‘forest’, and yoku means ‘bath’ – so ‘shinrin-yoku’ means bathing in the forest atmosphere, or taking in the forest through our senses,” explains Dr Qing Li, President of the Japanese Society of Forest Medicine.

“This is not exercise, hiking or jogging – it is simply being in nature, connecting with it through our sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. Shinrin-Yoku bridges the gap between us and the natural world.”

Having studied forest medicine since 2003, Dr Li explains how

forest bathing has become a vital part of preventative healthcare in Japan – prescribed to improve sleep quality, ability to focus and mood – which in turn, aids both physical and mental health by reducing the effects of stress on your body.

“Immersed in the natural world, we can experience the miracle of life and connect to something larger than ourselves. Nature takes our breath away and breathes new life into us”.

On a more local level, Sonya Dibbin is a Forest Therapy and Earthwalking Guide who lives in Winchester with her son. She set up ‘Adore Your Outdoors’

(adoreyouroutdoors.co.uk) in 2019 following a successful 25 years in IT Management.

“I wanted to spend more time outside in nature to connect with my creative side, and I felt a strong desire to help others with their emotional wellbeing. I have been interested in mental health for over a decade; I qualified in level 4 Therapeutic Counselling in 2011, and more recently in Children and Young People’s Mental Health.

“I firmly believe in the benefits of talking therapy, and have always said that society as a whole would be considerably better off if everyone had easy



the TREES

access to six sessions of CBT a year. I have also been practicing mindfulness and meditation for many years and find gratitude therapy to be particularly useful in keeping me grounded.”

When Sonya had her son a few years ago, she was determined to get him to fall in love with nature and noticed that the more time she was spending outside with him, the better she felt.

“I felt particularly at peace in woodland, surrounded by birds and trees and this feeling continued even after returning inside,” she says. “I began researching the healing power of nature and I was particularly drawn to forest therapy. There is a vast amount of scientific evidence showing its benefits, and I passionately believe this is a better way to address the mental health crisis and ease the suffering we are living with on a



Sonya Dibbin is a Forest Therapy and Earthwalking Guide living in Winchester

“I felt particularly at peace in woodland, surrounded by birds and trees and this feeling continued even after returning inside,”

day-to-day basis.”

But what exactly is a Forest Therapy Experience? Sonya explains: “I facilitate a series of groups and individual non-contact exercises that focus on

slowing down, turning off the chatter in the mind and bringing attention to the present moment. By activating their senses and reconnecting with the natural world, participants are often able to get in touch with long forgotten childhood memories, feelings of joy and carefree abandon, emotional blocks are lifted, they are refreshed and become a more resilient version of themselves.”

These sessions take place at a selection of difference locations across Hampshire. “Ancient woodlands have some fabulously old trees and flowers and connection seems to happen faster and more easily in these locations,” says Sonya. “My favourite is Crab Wood (Winchester), although there is a section in Micheldever with ancient conifers that I am particularly drawn to – it feels

as though pixies live there! The Country Parks (Itchen Valley in Eastleigh and Queen Elizabeth in the South Downs) are good because of the facilities on site and I like to bring in the element of water at River Hamble.”

Sonya reels off a long list of health benefits – from reduced levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, and boosted immune system; to a heightened sense of empathy and gratitude and reduced depression and anxiety.

“There is also research to suggest forest bathing can help with accelerated recovery from surgery and illness. Specifically attributed to inhalation of the chemicals emitted from trees, mainly conifers and oak, called Phytoncides.

“The best bit of feedback I’ve ever had was when someone suffering with ME said that the guided nature connection meditation, that I do at the start of a session, was the first time she had forgotten about her pain in months and months. That brought a tear to my eye!

“Others speak of the sessions being enlightening, as they start to notice so much natural beauty that’s all around them, and also that they continue to feel the calming benefits for several days afterwards.”

Forest art

Another Hampshire local utilising the forest’s healing properties is Deborah Porter from Core Art Journaling, who runs woodland workshops in the county.

“Joining ourselves to nature is the most natural place for us humans,” says Deborah, “nature is therapy, and my workshops



have the intention of improving an individual’s mental wellbeing.

“We light a fire, reset ourselves through some meditative breathing in the quietness and bird song and write free-flow to unload thoughts and emotions,” she continues. “The silence allows us to listen to the sounds of nature and enjoy the stillness. Woodland art journaling takes place at a slow, almost meditative pace, we take our time.

“Mark making with natural materials, tree rubbings, foraging for foliage and interesting shapes found on the floor bring back that childhood feeling of filling your pockets with sticks and stones. We collect and create prints, working with textures and shapes, into our upcycled journals,” Deborah explains.

Julie attended an Art Journaling in Nature session in 2019 and comments: “Deborah’s woodland workshop was such

a treat. A beautiful setting was one thing, but having someone talking through the processes step-by-step and having everything laid out for you was brilliant. I could quickly see the art being created. I loved foraging, it felt so satisfying! I had no idea I could produce so many lovely pictures so quickly and I now know that I do have a creative side after all! The workshop and being in nature was completely absorbing and takes you right away from every day stresses.”

Deborah’s Core Art Journaling Studio is set on the River Itchen, next to a beautiful nature reserve in historical Winchester. She plans to resume Art Journaling in nature sessions as soon as possible – in the meantime she is offering online sessions to give people a taster.

Find out more at coreartjournaling.com

“Nature is therapy, and my workshops have the intention of improving an individual’s mental wellbeing”

TOP RIGHT: Turning natural materials in to art work with Core Art Journaling

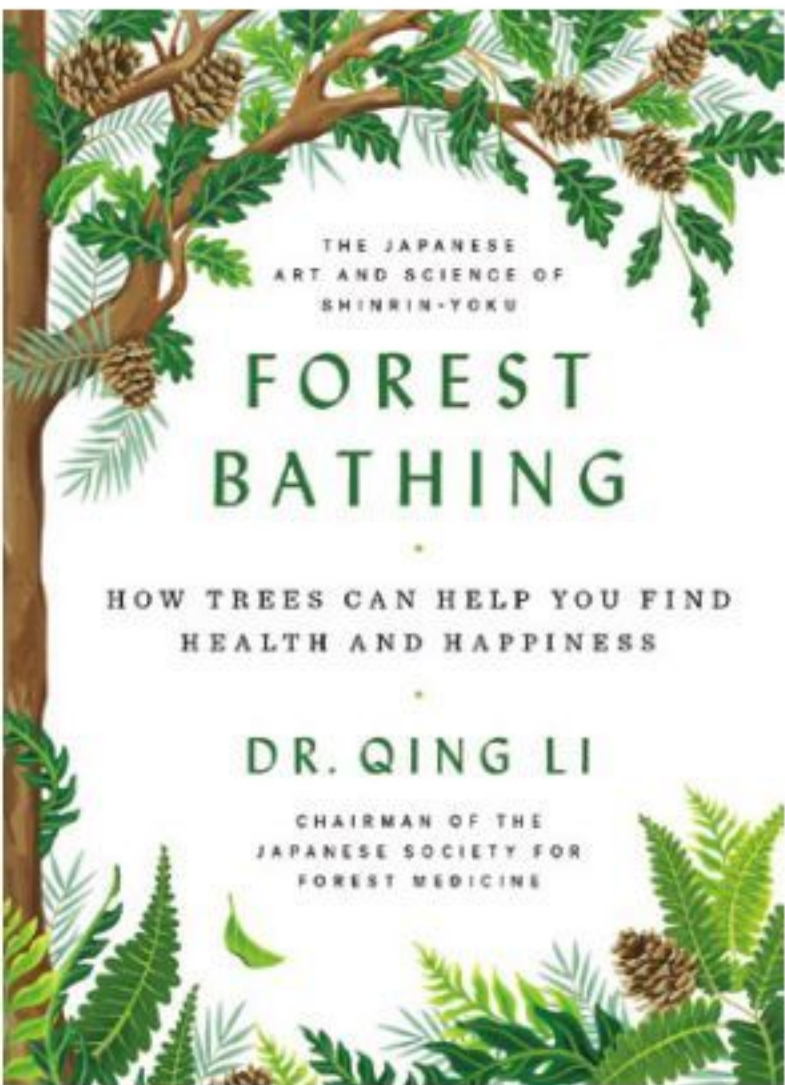
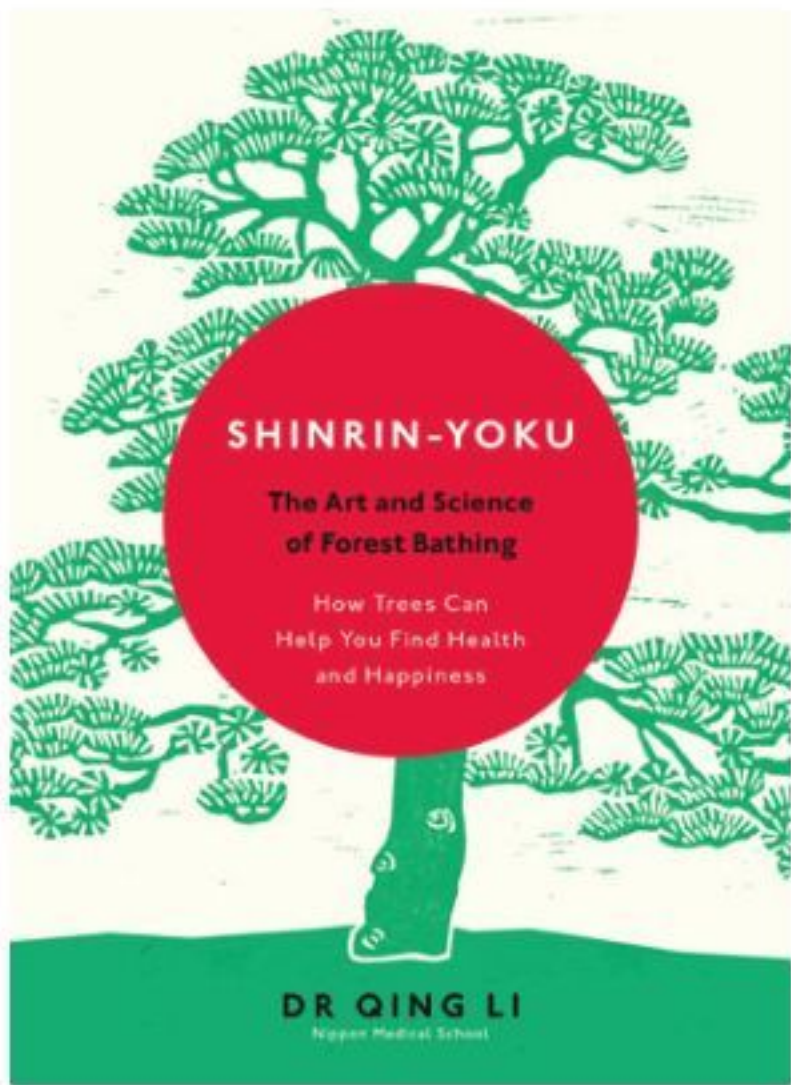
TOP LEFT: Woodland workshops run by Deborah Porter include using foraged materials to make art

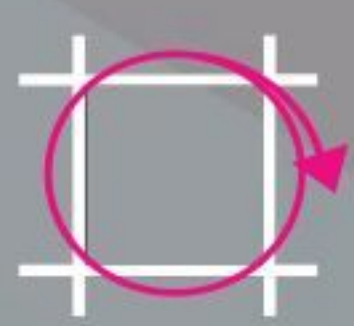
Top tips

- Make a plan based on your own physical abilities and avoid tiring yourself out by taking rest whenever you need to.
-
- Turn off your devices.
-
- Walk slowly and mindfully in the forest, taking in your surroundings by using all of your senses.

- Take some deep breaths - you can also do Tai chi or Yoga.
-
- Take off your shoes and walk in the forest barefoot.
-
- If you have an entire day, stay in the forest for around four hours and walk about five kilometres. If you have just a half day, stay in the forest for two hours and walk about 2.5 kilometres.

- Drink water/tea whenever you feel thirsty.
-
- Find a place you like, then sit for a while and read or enjoy the scenery.
-
- Read more about how to practice Shinrin-Yoku with Dr Qing Li’s book *Shinrin-Yoku, The Art and Science of Forest Bathing*, £9.99**





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WRITTEN *in the* STARS

Sunday Times Bestseller, Jessie Keane,
traces her love of writing back to
childhood days in Winchester

WORDS: Sandra Smith ♦ PHOTOS: Alexander James

I've been desperate to meet Jessie Keane ever since the beginning of the year when I was gripped by her latest crime novel, *The Knock*. Anyone who can sustain action and tension over 500 pages earns my respect.

But my curiosity was also piqued. The author's background is unconventional, despite an inevitability to carving out a successful career as a novelist. Her love of writing can, pretty much, be traced back to when she learned to hold a pen. Then there's her Romany roots, as colourful and creative as you might imagine, which included an uncannily accurate prediction by Grand, who had *The Sight* and foretold her then young granddaughter's future writing career. Not only was Grand's hand reading talent spot on, this female role model, one of several in Jessie's life, inspired a series of strong women who feature throughout her novels.

In the Soberton home she shares with her partner, Cliff, Jessie recalls those early years.

"I was born in a traditional old barrel top wagon belonging to my grandmother, which was in the grounds of my parents' house near Winchester. From an early age I loved writing, and won prizes at primary school. On my third birthday Grand examined the palms of my hands and said I had two writer's forks which meant I was not only going to

write but be famous too. I didn't believe it!"

Happily settled in the Meon Valley where walks along the "beautiful" Meon River are a favourite pastime, this quietly spoken author has lived in Hampshire all her life. Well, almost. A three month spell in London at the age of 15 offered temporary excitement until the lure of family and her home county enticed her back. A number of jobs – bacon slicer, trainee dental nurse, sweeper upper in a hairdressing salon – were as unfulfilling as they were brief. At 17 she married but divorced within a year. Then, with that underlying interest to write a constant presence, she used the proceeds from the sale of her wedding dress to purchase a typewriter and write chick lit. Were her stories favourably received? "I had absolutely no success at all," she states matter of factly. "After piles of rejections, in 2008, for my own amusement, I thought I'd write a thriller and knocked out *Dirty Game* in about three months."

This spontaneous decision, and rapid delivery, turned out to be a turning point. One of the six agents to whom Jessie had submitted her manuscript phoned with the news that a potential publisher might be interested. One week later Jessie received another call. "The agent said, 'Are you sitting down? Harper



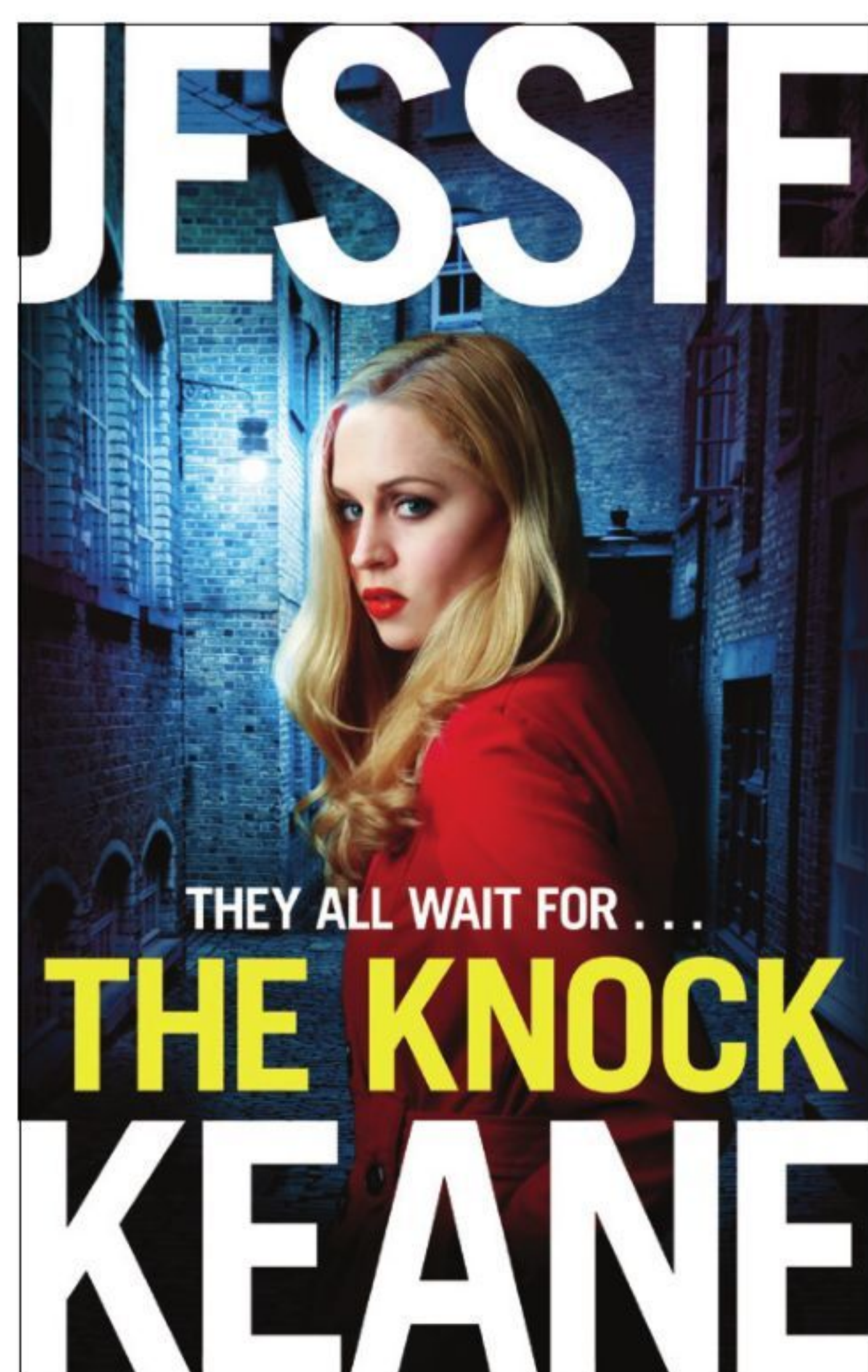
Collins are offering you a three book deal for a six figure sum.' I was staggered; this changed everything."

With book sales topping 1m, Jessie is currently putting the finishing touches to her 15th novel, *The Manor*, featuring two families fighting a turf war over what is at first a small East End gang stronghold which grows into a worldwide crime empire. Meanwhile *The Knock* is due out in paperback on July 23. There's no doubting her phenomenal success, particularly given the intuitive nature of her approach.

"My books are always very much a seat of the pants thing. I never plot. I just start and hope it's going to come through."

A modestly sized downstairs "cubby hole" is Jessie's working environment, one devoid of any distractions, even windows. Character driven; her gritty novels elicit a range of emotions. *The Knock*, which centres on Dora O'Brien and her daughter, Angel, both caught up in an underworld in which controlling gangsters and bent coppers challenge their grip on reality, is as exciting as it is heartbreaking. You don't have to have been exposed to crime or coercive behaviour to feel the reality in the characters and plot. How do ideas manifest themselves, I ask?

"I guess it's life. You look at things around you and see snippets of characters and things on the news. My characters develop as I write, reacting to other characters they encounter."



The Knock, published by Pan Macmillan, is out in paperback, on July 23, £7.99 jessie-keane.co.uk



'Wherever I've been, I've always loved coming back to the gentle hills and rivers of Hampshire'

She makes the creative process sound ridiculously easy. "People often ask me how I do it and I say I don't know. It's just a gift; I'm very lucky. I can scarcely believe my books are on The Sunday Times list of bestsellers."

But luck, as they say, is 90% hard work. And this is no exception in Jessie's case. A morning writing routine includes a wordcount of at least 1,000 followed by an afternoon editing and refining those words which are initially "just splurged down." Any fun writing the first draft, she declares, is tempered by laborious redrafting although, with experience, the process has become easier.

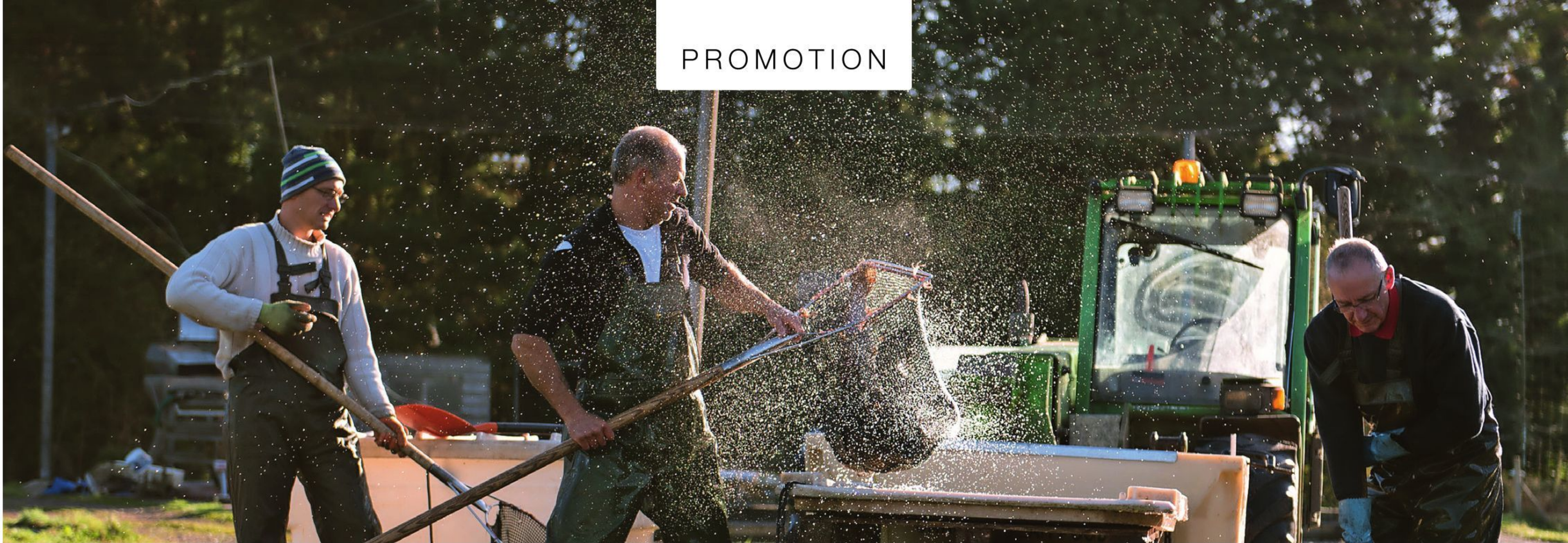
"In my first manuscript I didn't even number the pages! You write one book then realise you've got to produce another good one, then another but your belief in yourself starts to grow."

After numerous drafts as deadlines approach, Jessie

confesses to relief once final edits are completed. Then, within two or three weeks, she's itching to begin her next novel.

A sinister thread may run through Jessie Keane's books but mention her home county and a soft voice responds, "Wherever I've been, I've always loved coming back to the gentle hills and rivers of Hampshire." Perhaps she owes this affinity to the surrounding splendour of the county capital where her heritage began.

But back to 2020. It's been a challenging year in many ways yet for someone who is comfortable in her own company, and has chosen an isolating profession, the lockdown has made little difference. "I'm basically unemployable. I love being on my own. I always wanted to write and this is the fulfilment of a lifetime dream. I've achieved what I wanted and I can't imagine stopping." 🐼



Thrings Eats...

with Hugo Hardman, ChalkStream Trout

Hugo Hardman transformed the trout from forgotten fish to one that hooked the attention of top restaurants. He tells Mark Charter, a Partner in the Agriculture team at the Romsey office of the law firm Thrings, how lockdown meant he had to re-think his business overnight.

“You can’t furlough a fish,” says Hugo Hardman, parked halfway up the M3 in the van he’s now using every day to deliver Hampshire trout door-to-door.

It’s the phrase he uses when he talks about the rapid change his business had to make when the Coronavirus lockdown shut down the hotels, pubs and restaurants that made up the customer base for ChalkStream Trout.

Overnight, Hugo and his team switched to home delivery – adapting their website to enable orders, putting the word out through social media and leafleting thousands of homes.

“Fleet Services has become my second home over the last few months,” he says, pulling in there for our socially-distanced chat. “I’ve done nothing but deliveries all day every day – it’s the hardest work I’ve ever had, but we have to keep the farms going and keep the business alive, so we’ve had no choice.”

The farms Hugo is referring to are all built on the sites of old water mills and

draw from the Itchen and Test rivers. They have been there for 30 years or more, but Hugo’s involvement came in 2014 when he was looking for a new venture after selling a successful coffee business.

The key to success was turning around the fortunes of the humble English rainbow trout, then very much out of favour. “I’m from Hampshire, and wanted to have a business here,” he says. “Through some friends, I met the owner of our farm at Itchen Abbas and at the time they were struggling. Trout had been fashionable in the 70s and 80s but at that time was seen as the poor relation to salmon.”

The farms were mainly selling smaller fish but Hugo had a revelation when he saw some that were much larger. “When I saw the bigger trout I thought they looked amazing – why weren’t we selling those? So I took some of those around my old coffee customers and they loved it.”

With the brand name ChalkStream Trout in mind, Hugo began inviting chefs to try the fish, which are slow-grown to up to 3kgs over two years – far bigger than those found on supermarket shelves.

It’s this farming technique, coupled with the high, fast-flowing water on the farms, that produces the firm, well-muscled trout, low in fat and high in flavour, that the chefs loved. The writer and chef Yotam Ottolenghi, who enthused about ChalkStream in *The Guardian*, became one of many respected supporters in the culinary world.

“We started getting onto the cruise



liners, we were in The Ritz, and across Hampshire in the likes of The Pig restaurants, Lime Wood and Chewton Glen,” says Hugo. “We grew the business through chefs spreading the word”.

Another high-profile supporter is Jamie Oliver, who has filmed at the farms for an episode of his series *Friday Night Feast*, yet to be screened.

When lockdown began, the TV chef posted a video featuring the trout to his eight million Instagram followers. Within minutes, the ChalkStream website had thousands of visitors.

Home delivery has been so well-received that Hugo has vowed to continue with it even when the restaurant trade returns. “There have been positives,” he says. “We’re hoping that at the end of it all we’ll have a brand that thousands more people will know, and Hampshire will have a fish that’s widely known and respected. For me that’s always been the goal, however we do it – for people to appreciate the fish.” ♦



Mark Charter,
Thrings

For more information about Thrings solicitors, please visit www.thrings.com



In support of the
Countryside Education Trust

Extending its reach

A new writing festival is going virtual for its first event to inspire and support first-time authors

WORDS: Duncan Hall ♦ PHOTOS: Courtesy of Sara Gangai

When Sara Gangai put together plans for the first Writers' Weekend Winchester, she had no idea that the coronavirus lockdown would throw everything askew.

But in planning the follow-up to the hugely successful Winchester Writers' Festival, which ended in 2019 after 39 years, she added a virtual element which is now paying dividends.

"There's so much video conferencing going on nowadays," she told Hampshire Life before the lockdown fell. "We had feedback in the past from people who would have loved to have come, but it was too far away, or they couldn't afford it. By putting elements on a website people can purchase a video or a virtual package for an inexpensive price."

Fast forward three months and the entirety of Writers' Weekend Winchester has gone virtual – from streamed talks to workshops, as well as the exclusive 15-minute one-to-one sessions allowing writers to speak directly to literary agents and publishers.

"We wanted to ensure the writing community can still access the extraordinary range of content the Writers' Weekend offers," says Sara announcing the new format. "While the technology is easy-to-use we will hold training sessions ahead of the event and provide support to anyone who needs help to set up their computer, tablet or smartphone. We want everyone to enjoy what will be an amazing weekend."

The Writers' Weekend's forerunner, Winchester Writers' Festival, was founded by Barbara



Sara Gangai has organised this years' Writers' Weekend

Mary Browne



Eoin Colfer is one of the keynote speakers this year



Lissa Evans is a bestselling author ready to share her top tips

Large, who died last year. Sara estimates more than 100 visitors had their books published as a result of the festival over the past 39 years – including returning speakers Claire Fuller, whose 2015 debut *Our Endless Numbered Days* won the Desmond Elliot Prize in 2015, and former director Judith Heneghan whose latest novel *Snegurochka* was published last year.

“We don’t always hear about some of the people being published,” admits Sara, who worked on the Writers’ Festival for eight years as event manager and was the director of the final event last year.

“Literary agents and publishers consider this to be the festival to go to – they had been contacting me saying they wanted to come.”

The change in name, and date to July, has arisen after the University of Winchester decided to cease their involvement in the event, although pre-lockdown they had offered the use of university buildings for workshops and speeches. “It meant we got more freedom,” says Sara, who decided to move the festival to July to make it more accessible for accommodation.

She also moved the main event to the weekend and doubled the number of keynote speakers to two. Both are still giving speeches: *Artemis Fowl* creator Eoin Colfer on Saturday and on Sunday Lissa Evans, the bestselling author of *Their Finest Hour and a Half*, which

was recently filmed as *Their Finest*. The programme features a further 65 talks, including readings from Jasper Fforde, author of *Thursday Next* books, Nick Barlay and Kate Bradley.

“I went out to our speakers to ensure that they’d be comfortable delivering talks, workshops and one-to-ones in a video-conference format,” says Sara. “Many had already been using virtual communication technology, such as Zoom. With the advancements in video-conference software we’re lucky to be able to provide an interactive and exciting

“Over the weekend we will be offering up to five one-to-one spots with literary agents and publishers. No other writing festival offers this.”

programme to a wider audience in the comfort of their home.”

The festival will now feature 19 one-hour talks on the craft of writing, 18 two-hour workshops and more than 800 one-to-one appointments with literary agents and editors who are keen to see writing submissions. It’s this element which Sara believes gives the festival its edge over other literary events.

“It’s easier to get published today because you can self-publish,” says Sara. “But people tend to write something they think is commercially viable when it’s not necessarily so. We are really trying to stress the importance of having work

professionally edited – learning all the tricks, finding out how things really work by giving the option to approach agents on the spot.

“Over the weekend we will be offering up to five one-to-one spots with literary agents and publishers. No other writing festival offers this. Most of the time writers will send submissions to agents and might never hear anything at all. Here they will upload submissions ahead of time so the agent can read it and make notes ahead of their 15-minute meeting. And agents like to sit face-to-face with people – they can tell so much by the writer’s body language, what they say and how they present their work.”

As for the future Sara is hoping the Writers’ Weekend format is something which could be sold to other cities to increase its reach. “We have had people come from Scotland and Ireland before – it would be great to go into their areas. Our main focus is to help people get from inspiration to publication.”

The physical Writers’ Festival did see visitors coming from as far afield as Dubai, Barbados, across Europe, the US and Hong Kong to network in Hampshire. With a virtual Writers’ Weekend that reach could go even further. 🐷

The first virtual Writers’ Weekend Winchester is running from 9 to 12 July. Find out more at writersweekend.uk

10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

SWAY

Smugglers, treacle mines and the world's tallest tower, this New Forest village has tales aplenty

WORDS: Faith Eckersall ♦ ILLUSTRATION: Lucy Atkinson

A BIT ABOUT SWAY

1 Sway parish in the New Forest was created in 1879 when lands were hived off from the adjoining parish of Boldre. But, it goes much further back than that, possibly, even, to the Bronze Age. It's Anglo Saxon name, Svieia, means 'noisy stream' and it is listed no less than four times in the Domesday Book. Like many places it's been bickered over by assorted aristocrats over the centuries, emerging to become one of the forest's nicest villages.

A TALL TALE

3 When Andrew Thomas Turton Peterson became a spiritualist he consulted a medium who put him in touch with Sir Christopher Wren. The late architect reportedly told him to build a tower to help bring employment to the area, so in 1879 Peterson built Sway Tower, or Peterson's Folly as it was locally known. The amazing edifice is still the tallest non-reinforced concrete structure in the world at 66 metres high, and is now privately owned.

FOOD AND DRINK

5 The Hare and Hounds is a 200-year-old, family-owned pub on Durnstown in Sway which has everything you'd hope to find in a local inn, with traditional grub, a vegetarian and a children's menu. The Silver Hind in Station Road is a bar and restaurant which offers a set lunch with delights including oak-smoked salmon with capers. Check out, too, The Manor at Sway, a highly-regarded boutique hotel which offers top-notch foodie fare.

FAMOUS BOOK

2 When Capt. Marryat wrote *Children of the New Forest* in 1847 he could never have imagined that his tale about the plucky Beverley children, who were orphaned in the English Civil War and hid from the Roundheads in the New Forest, would become such a hit; adapted an impressive four times for television. The children's home was based in Arnewood House which stood to the south of the village, before it was sadly destroyed by a fire.

LEGACY OF WAR

4 Just as Sway Tower was used by the Home Guard as a WW2 lookout, the RAF found use for land to the south of the village to use as an emergency landing ground for aircraft at nearby RAF Christchurch. Planes were parked there overnight to keep them safe from German attack but sadly, the plan failed and the Luftwaffe bombed on several occasions. In 1941 the site was abandoned and after the war, pieces of shrapnel were found in the thatch roofs.

RAILWAY HASSLE

6 The coming of the railways changed Britain irrevocably but were not without their problems. Sway was delighted to get its own station on the line to Bournemouth but due to various problems the station house was built a full two years before the track appeared, in 1888. The direct line from Brockenhurst to Christchurch was so delayed that the construction company went bust and, more tragically still, at least ten workers lost their lives.

TREACLE MINES

7 The 'treacle' was the nickname given to the pernicious Barton Clay, through which the unfortunate navvies building the railway line had to cut. Engineer Joseph Firkbank described the substance as: 'treacherous and slippery in the highest degree.' Workers complained about having to scrape the clay off everything, adding to their strenuous workload. The Treacle Mines were a local joke destination, along with 'Sway Docks'.





8

8 The good folk of Sway may be upstanding now but only a few hundred years ago were being described by their own vicar as ‘little better than bandits’. The reason? Smuggling! Due to punitive taxes, smuggling was a widespread activity and Sway was no exception. The village lay on an established route from the coast up to Beaulieu. Nearby Boldre church was used as a contraband store, as were the cellars of Sway House.

9

9 Thanks to ArtSway – plenty! The art and culture organisation was founded in 1997 and continues to programme exciting exhibitions, showcasing national and international artists from its base in Station Road. It also runs artist-led courses and workshops for adults and children as well as gallery talks and events. Sway village Hall is the scene for popular drama productions, live music and dances and the village also has a thriving cricket team.

10

10 Named after the sandy Marl clay, upon which its vines grow, The Marlings in Mead End Road is one of the oldest vineyards in Hampshire. The 30-year-old vineyard is famed for its Sparkling Rosé, made using traditional methods, from a range of still white and rosé wines and its sparkling Rose Brut won Wine of the Year 2019. The vineyard are offering a full delivery service so you can still enjoy their wines at home. marlingsvineyard.co.uk

NEXT MONTH: Learn more about Eversley



A whole new world

This month marks 400 years since the iconic Mayflower docked in Southampton with its pilgrim passengers hopeful for a new life in America, but it wasn't all plain sailing

WORDS: Richard Holledge ♦ PHOTOS: Courtesy of Southampton City Art Gallery

It was a July day in Southampton, 1620. A crowd gathered to stare as a commotion broke out on West Quay. Raised voices were heard and insults bandied.

These were not traders disputing a dockside deal or drunken stevedores spilling out the taverns spoiling for a fight. No, these were otherwise respectable types who had only recently sailed into port on two ships and moored without fuss by the quay.

One, little more than a 60-ton pinnace was the Speedwell. Older dock hands might have remembered her when she was called the Swiftsure and had seen action against the Spanish Armada more than 30 years before.

The other, much bigger at 180 tons, was a run of the mill vessel normally used in the cross-Channel wine trade. Its name,

the Mayflower. Hardly worth a glance.

But what must have caught the eye of the dockers was that both ships were loaded, not with barrels of wine or serge, for which Southampton was noted, but men, women and children - entire families with their servants in tow.

It transpired that the two ships were planning to sail to Virginia, as the English colony in America was known, where they were to create a new settlement. The Speedwell had sailed from Holland with 67 members of a religious group who had lived in Leiden for ten years after fleeing persecution in England. Pilgrims, they dubbed themselves.

The 65 passengers on the Mayflower who had set off from the London port of Rotherhithe were altogether different; while the families from Leiden dreamed of creating a perfect society in a

'It transpired that the two ships were planning to sail to Virginia, as the English colony in America was known, where they were to create a new settlement'

brave new world, the eager young adventurers on the Mayflower had more a material ambition; to make a fortune from the beaver trade.

Despite their mismatched aims the first meeting of these two groups in late July was amicable. William Bradford, who was to become governor of the settlement, wrote about a 'joyful welcome and mutual congratulations with other friendly entertainment', but the positive mood did not last long.

In fact, so bitter were the rows which broke out between the pilgrims and the London businessmen who were financing the voyages, known as the Merchant Adventurers, that the venture itself was threatened.

It had already got off to a bad start. The Speedwell sprung a leak on the short crossing from Holland and had to be repaired. Some chroniclers claim the ship



had been fitted with masts and sails which were too big and strained the timber framework; Bradford blamed the 'cunning and deceit of the captain and the sailors,' who were reluctant to make the arduous voyage and sabotaged the venture.

While they waited for the repairs to be completed, the Leiden contingent started fighting among themselves. One accused another of spending £700 (ca £210,000 today) in Southampton on provisions such as cheese, bread and beer which had not materialised and, in return, was damned for his negligence.

What angered the pilgrim hierarchy most, however, was the way their negotiator with the Merchants; a gentle soul by name of Robert Cushman, had allowed himself to be bullied into accepting changes in the arrangements which had already been agreed. They demanded a

bigger share of the profits and refused to let the pilgrims have two days off a week for prayer and rest. Or else, they threatened, they would pull out of the deal altogether.

Cushman was dubbed 'brainless' by his fellow pilgrims and accused of betrayal, while he in turn bitterly reproved them for behaving with 'clamour and jangling' and failing to sympathise with his impossible situation.

When it came to dealing face to face with the man representing those 'bloodsuckers,' as the pilgrims angrily described the Merchant Adventurers, they were as unsuccessful as Cushman. They could not make him relent 'one jot.' Thomas Weston was his name, a sly knave if ever there was, who warned them that one investor had already withdrawn his £500 investment (ca £150,000) and that others would

follow suit if they did not agree to the new terms. They refused and he returned to London much offended leaving the pilgrims short of £100 (ca £30,000) to buy the last of their supplies.

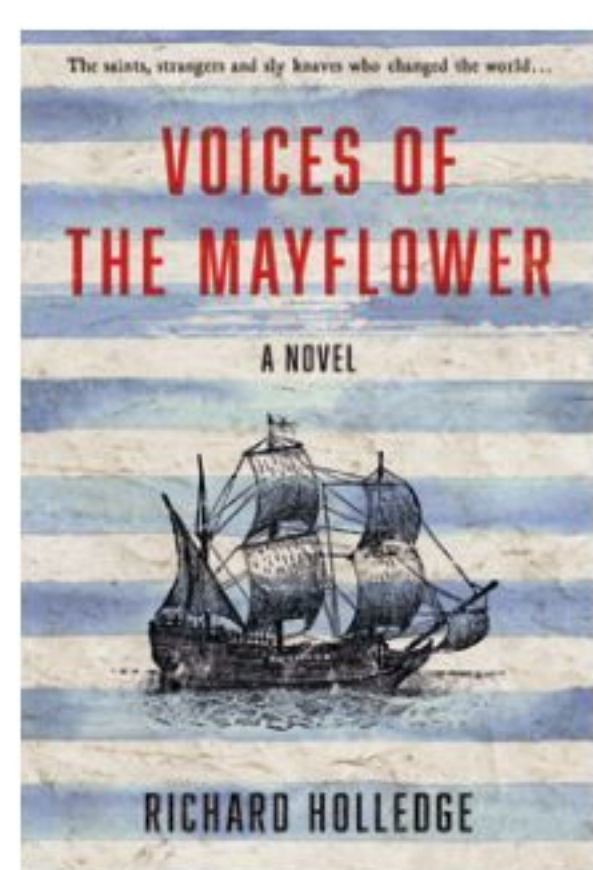
They had little choice but to sell £60-worth of provisions, including three or four firkins of butter and, as Bradford wrote, 'we put ourselves on the bare necessities.'

Quite possibly, as they squabbled, one of the passengers would have looked on with a patronising air for, as Stephen Hopkins was happy to boast, he was the only passenger to have crossed the Atlantic before.

Hampshire-born Hopkins was baptised in 1581 in All Saints church in Upper Clatford near Andover and later lived in Winchester and Hursley where he married his first wife Mary. In 1609 he took a job as a minister's clerk and left his family behind to

LEFT: How the Mayflower would have looked at sea

ABOVE: The Mayflower departs Southampton in 1620



Voices of the Mayflower by Richard Holledge is out now from Troubador Books and P&G Wells Booksellers, 11, College Street, Winchester, SO23 9LZ, 01962 852016

TOP: Southampton's town quay, as it would have looked in the nineteenth century

join an expedition to Jamestown, Virginia.

The ship was wrecked on Bermuda and after several months surviving on turtles, birds and wild pigs, Hopkins helped organise a mutiny against the expedition governor. It failed and he was sentenced to death.

Only craven pleas for mercy saved him. As an account had it: 'So penitent he was, and made so much moan, alleging the ruin of his wife and children in this his trespass, as it wrought in the hearts of all the better sorts of the company'.

Eventually, the castaways built a boat and sailed to Jamestown where Hopkins stayed for several years before returning to live in Whitechapel, east London. The shipwreck captured the public imagination and some reckon it was the inspiration for Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*. Hopkins, no doubt, rather fancied himself as the venerable seer Prospero, but he was more like his near namesake Stephano, the drunken butler.

Eager for another exploit he sailed from London on

the *Mayflower* with his three children and second wife Elizabeth who was pregnant and gave birth during the voyage. They named the boy Oceanus.

A contradictory character, he took part in the early explorations on Cape Cod to find a suitable site for a settlement and served the new colony well, but he was often in trouble with the authorities. For example, he was fined £7 for assault and £2 for 'suffering servants and others to sit drinking in his house and for selling beer, wine and 'strong waters.'

He prospered, ending his days with 14 acres of land, a house and a 'great bull'. But his legacy is not as significant as another man with a Southampton connection, albeit fleeting, 22-year-old John Alden. The crew had been recruited in London but there was a need for a cooper to maintain the barrels of beer and assist as a carpenter. Some historians have suggested Alden was born in Southampton, but it seems more likely he came from Harwich, Essex, hometown of the *Mayflower* skipper Christopher

Jones, who invited him to join the enterprise.

Alden became one of the settlement's leading lights, despite being caught up in the killing of a trespasser on settlement territory. He was held by the Massachusetts Bay Colony for questioning but discharged.

But perhaps his claim to fame is that he married fellow passenger Priscilla Mullins, whose parents and brother had all perished in the first winter, and together they had ten children who in turn are ancestors to two million Americans today.

He must have been mightily relieved when the ships set sail on August 5 'trusting to the good providence of God' as Bradford recorded optimistically, only to have his hopes swiftly dashed when the *Speedwell*, still as 'leakie as a sieve' had to dock for more repairs, first in Dartmouth and again in Plymouth.

The *Speedwell* pulled out of the venture but, at last, on September 6, 1620, pilgrims and adventurers alike crowded on to the *Mayflower* and this time there was no turning back. 🐷

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A local's guide to EMSWORTH

Residents reflect on life in this picturesque waterside village

WORDS AND PHOTOS: Emma Caulton

Emsworth is enchanting: an old fishing village sitting at the top of Chichester Harbour with mill ponds either side. Its location has shaped its character,

industry (boat-building and fishing) and leisure. Emsworth has also established a reputation as a food and drink destination with a deli, greengrocer, wine merchants and eateries including

Good Food Guide recommended 36 on the Quay found among its higgledy-piggledy streets. This means Emsworth attracts foodies as well as artists, sailors and locals pursuing personal passions.

Ken Brown, Harbour Records

Harbour Records, a stone's throw from Emsworth's picturesque harbour, has been established as a niche vinyl emporium for six years. It is owned by Phil Church and managed by vinyl and music enthusiasts Ken Brown and Rob Moore, who both have a long history of involvement with the Portsmouth music scene. Ken promotes shows in the area

under the auspices of Square Roots Promotions while Rob is a popular DJ. Specialising in vinyl (but also quality used CDs), Harbour Records is a crate-diggers dream.

Ken's local life

"There's a real community feel about the village and we have lots of regulars who often drop in for a chat. We love to hear music-related tales of years gone by."

A secret: "The Solar Heritage harbour tour. This is an historical trip around the harbour, with

interesting commentary from a local guide, on board an Aquarius C60 pollution-free, solar-powered catamaran. Lovely in summer months."

Something special: "It's an obvious one, but the Harbour itself is beautiful, especially when the sun is out. Even when it's blowing a gale and tipping down, it's still amazing! Walks around the Harbour and shoreline are good for the soul, as well as the body."

Favourite pub: "They're all great, but if you twisted my

arm I'd go for The Blue Bell Inn, down the road from the shop. They also serve fantastic food."

Evening out: "Wemsfest. A wide variety of quality folk, roots and blues brought to the area by local promoter Mark Ringwood."

Local Event: "Once a year there's National Record Store Day. We have a great selection of music released especially for this event and we supplement that with in-store acoustic performances, prizes and discounts."



Narrow South Street suddenly opens onto the sunny, sheltered quayside with wide watery horizon



Karen Hall, owner, Karen George boutique

Karen Hall, Karen George

Karen opened her boutique Karen George in 2017. She was previously a Director of Rachel George, a shoe shop in Chichester which closed due to rising overheads in the city. However, Karen had a burning desire to open another shop on a smaller scale and when a shop became available in Emsworth the temptation was too much to resist! Initially Karen sold accessories and shoes, with many customers from Rachel George following her footwear brands. It soon became clear that there was a demand for clothing, too. Now 80 per cent of her business is clothing, stocking names such as Marble, Adini and Luella.

Karen’s local life

“The best things about Emsworth are the little independent shops and eateries, and the locals, who are so friendly and supportive.”

Favourite eateries: “I’m still working my way round all the different places to eat, but I often frequent Driftwood café and the Blue Bell Inn. Then there’s exquisite Fat Olives for a special treat - they source local ingredients and produce the most fabulous meals.”

Shops: “One of the newest additions to Emsworth is PO10 where local artists get the opportunity to display their work. It is always a nice shop to browse for something more individual. Emsworth has pretty much everything apart from a bank – although a mobile bank visits twice a week.”

Overnight: “Emsworth is a great destination with a choice of places to stay including Brookfield Hotel and 36 on The Quay.”

Walk: “I try and walk around the pond every morning before opening the shop. It sets me up for the day. It’s so pretty with plenty of wildlife for company. Everyone greets you with a smile or a ‘good morning’.”



Harbour Records is a crate-diggers dream



The harbour landscape changes with the tides

STEVEN BORLAND,
PARTNER, BORLAND
& BORLAND

Such is Steven Borland's local knowledge and passion for Emsworth that he's written a book, *Mud Pattens in the Morning* [a local history of wildfowling], which features a timeless picture of Emsworth Harbour on its cover. Steven established Borland & Borland Estate Agents in Emsworth in March 1995 with the intention of moving away from the corporate agency style towards a truly independent agency offering a more personal service.

Steven's local life

"Who would have thought we'd be celebrating our 25th anniversary in a lockdown? Still, we couldn't have chosen a better spot. The pretty harbourside village is hard to beat with its tranquil harbour waters to the south and the rolling South Downs to the north, plus its variety of independent shops and restaurants in the centre, Emsworth has it all covered."

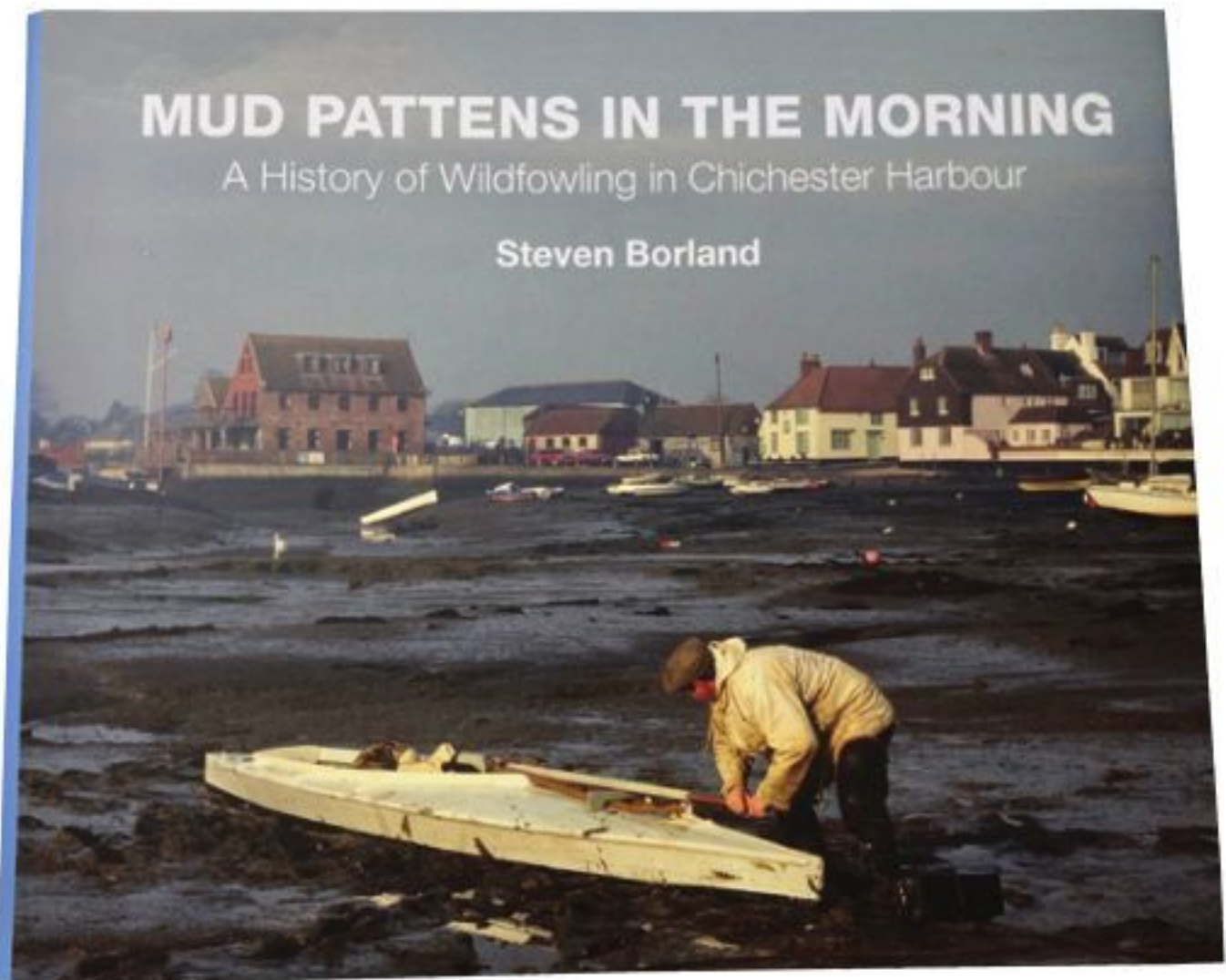
Something special: "Check out Emsworth Museum: it traces Emsworth's fascinating maritime history, including its oyster industry, and author PG Wodehouse's links with Emsworth."

Event: "The regular Farmer's Market in St Peter's Square with local food and drink producers is a highlight." [Returning post-lockdown to a local car park to enable social-distancing.]

Favourite café: "Driftwood Café is the perfect place to meet for tea, coffee and cake with its airy, coastal décor, relaxed atmosphere and courtyard garden."

Shop: "Portal Dingwall & Norris Wine & Spirit Merchants, established since 1830 with a fine choice of wine and port, plus a corner devoted to whisky."

Walk: "One of our favourite walks takes you through Emsworth Marina past The Deck café and round Thorney Island. If you're lucky you might even spot seals off the coast!"



Steven Borland, partner, Borland & Borland



Supplied by Thomas Giles Babb

Blue Bell inn is located yards from Emsworth's quay

THOMAS GILES BABB,
BLUE BELL INN

Giles has lived in Emsworth since 1994 when his father, Thomas Babb Senior, bought The Blue Bell Inn. He recalls Emsworth being a wonderful place to spend weekends and summer holidays. However, being a pub landlord was not on his radar. Having worked in various restaurants and for the royal family, his intention was to become head chef, not a business owner. When his Dad was struggling to find a chef, Giles returned to the business on a temporary basis - and never left. He bought the pub from his father in 2010. Last year he also established The Thomas Babb Brewing Company and expanded to a second site, The Star and Garter in East Dean. During lockdown Giles had to rethink his operation, launching a frozen ready meal service and a chilled cook at home meal service, both using locally sourced produce.

Giles' local life

"Emsworth has a fantastic community spirit with a vibrant high street. Food is a strong theme here."

Something special: "It's a great place to do watersports. There are two sailing clubs, and the quay or the bottom of Warblington Road are both perfect for SUP, kayaking or windsurfing."

Favourite shop: "Emsworth is full of quirky independent shops like family-run Chalcrafts antiques."

Restaurant: "Fat olives - Julia and Lawrence offer exceptional seasonal menus in a relaxed environment."

Walk: "We love a walk along the shore, through the churchyard of St Thomas à Becket to Langstone, for a pint at The Royal Oak or The Ship."

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Shopping & Coffee



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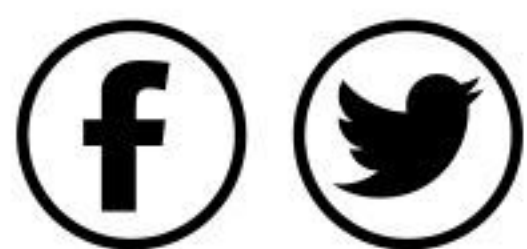
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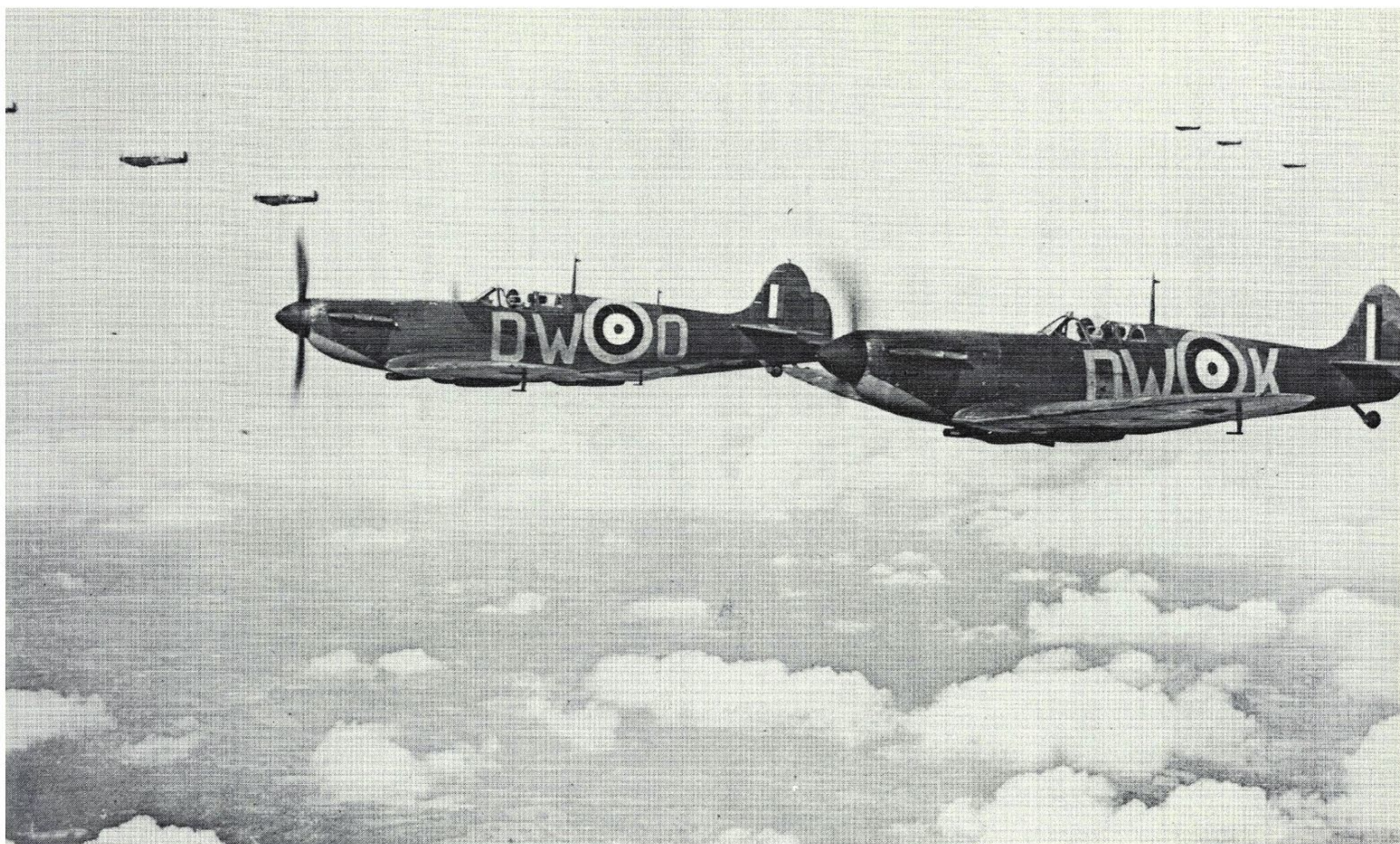
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Frank Webster in his Spitfire during the Battle of Britain

A timeless flight

As we mark 80 years since the Battle of Britain, we remember two of the Hampshire 'Few' who gave their lives to save others

WORDS: Malcolm Triggs

Eighty years on from one of the most important conflicts won by this country in the whole of the 20th century, new information continues to come to light about the men of the Royal Air Force who won the Battle of Britain.

As recently as last year, the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust added another name to the list of the fewer-than 3,000 who make

up 'the Few' after accepting that Blenheim pilot Donald Brown, who flew with No 604 Squadron, qualified for the honour.

While it took eight decades to put right that omission, other errors have been corrected more swiftly, while new evidence continues to help the Trust and others build up a more accurate picture of the 1940 aerial battle that stopped Hitler's planned invasion of this country.

For several decades, Hampshire man Frank Kinnersley Webster, whose family ran the Stag Hotel at Lake on the Isle of Wight, was thought to have died when his battle-damaged Spitfire caught fire after crashing as he attempted to land it on an airfield just inland from Dover's iconic white cliffs.

It was not until the mid-eighties that this account of his death, supported by an official entry in

the squadron's operations record book (ORB), was questioned after the remains of the aircraft were excavated and examined.

Investigators discovered that the aircraft had buried itself 12 feet into the airfield at Hawkinge and been crushed by the impact, showing that it had in fact fallen from a great height.

Webster, who was born on 17 December 1917 to Elizabeth and Jasper Kinnersley Webster, achieved sporting success at Bedford Modern School and worked as a buyer before joining the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (RAFVR) in about April 1939.

Called up on 1 September that year, he completed his training and was commissioned on 27 July 1940, a couple of weeks or so after the start of the Battle of Britain on 10 July. He joined No. 610 Squadron at Biggin Hill the next day and was immediately sent away for training on Spitfires, re-joining the squadron on 12 August.

Surviving an engagement with Messerschmitt Bf 109s during his first recorded patrol on 24 August, Pilot Officer Webster was airborne again two days later, attempting to stop a Luftwaffe bombing raid on Folkestone.

It would have been a frightening experience for the inexperienced 26 year-old, and one that he failed to come through. While the original ORB entry suggested that the aircraft caught fire on crashing, it is now thought that it dived vertically into the ground from around 16,000 ft.

In his book on the squadron, *610 County of Chester Auxiliary Air Force Squadron 1936 – 1940*, author David J Bailey suggests that his commanding officer's observation that, "His aircraft appeared to be undamaged before the crash", makes it likely that the pilot had been killed at the controls.

Webster was buried in Sandown Cemetery, Lake, in the same grave as his father, Captain Jasper Kinnersley Webster.

According to the Isle of Wight County Press, during the funeral the Rev D Williams recalled then Prime Minister Winston Churchill's observation that, "Never in the field of human



A memorial for the Battle of Britain at Capel-le-Ferne

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few"



Frank Webster was killed at his controls

conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." David J Bailey points out how quickly the reference to 'the Few' had entered the language, since Churchill's now-famous speech had only been made some ten days earlier.

Another Hampshire man who helped keep the Nazis at bay during the Battle of Britain was Sergeant Pilot William Silver, from Portsmouth – although he, too, was nearly the victim of a poorly-kept ORB.

With record-keeping not always as accurate in 1940 as it is now, coming up with a definitive list of the Few has not been possible, and it is generally accepted that there never will be an ultimate list.

The Christopher Foxley-Norris Memorial Wall at the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne, home to the National Memorial to the Few, lists just under 3,000 names. It was unveiled in 2005, but there is already a waiting list of amendments as a result of new evidence.



The Christopher Foxley-Norris Memorial

‘With record-keeping not always as accurate in 1940 as it is now, coming up with a definitive list of the Few has not been possible, and it is generally accepted that there never will be an ultimate list’

To be awarded the Battle of Britain Clasp to the 1939-45 star, an airman had to complete at least one operational sortie with a recognised unit of Fighter Command between 10 July and 31 October – and the most straightforward way to prove that was to be mentioned in the ORB.

As former Battle of Britain Memorial Trustee and author Geoff Simpson relates in his definitive history of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association, in the 1970s the BBFA wanted to remove Sgt Silver, of No. 152 Squadron, from the list because there was no reference to him in the ORB.

The BBFA lost the argument. Not only did Sgt Silver fly operationally in the battle, he gave his life for the cause, being shot down and killed over

Portsmouth on 25 September.

According to Geoff Simpson, his death was witnessed by his comrade, Pilot Officer ‘Boy’ Marrs who, in a letter to his father later published in *The Aeroplane* in 1945, said Sgt Silver’s Spitfire “dived vertically into the sea” after being jumped by a Bf 109.

Sgt Silver is buried in Milton Road Cemetery, Portsmouth, alongside his daughter Joyce, who died in 1965, aged just 26, after the birth of her only child.

While it can be hard to prove entitlement to the Clasp, others claim it when they have no right to do so. Geoff Simpson relates tales of an RAF pilot who was lauded as a Battle of Britain veteran despite having not flown in the Battle, one man who served as ground crew but always

claimed to have flown in the Battle and another who recorded his (invented) memories of the conflict – including having been shot down in a Hurricane – for an oral history archive.

He gives the last word to University of London academic Dr Tony Mansell, who has pointed out: “The important thing to realise about [squadron records] is that they were being compiled on airfields which could be in the thick of the fighting, including being bombed, and their compilers had other things on their minds than the convenience of future historians.”

Churchill’s Few are remembered at the Battle of Britain Memorial, Capel-le-Ferne in Kent. For more information see battleofbritainmemorial.org



Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve in Eversley

Courtesy of Hampshire Countryside Service

Hampshire is home to no less than six species of Leaf Cutter bees, a lesser-known but common group of bees, known for cutting small discs out of leaves. The removal of small sections of leaf doesn't hurt the plant, so gardeners needn't worry – in fact, Leaf Cutter bees are valuable pollinators.

Leaf Cutter bees look quite like Honey bees, but behave very differently, living solitary lives and building incredible nests in dead wood, stems, or even in bare ground.

The female bees cut out very neat, small, crescent shape pieces of leaf or petal, using their jaws. They then carry them back to the nest between their legs. Once back at the nest they stick them together, using them to construct a line of cells. They then fill these with nectar and pollen before laying an egg in each cell, and capping with a leaf plug. The grubs will then hatch and over-winter in the nest.

Different species are active at different times, but between May and September is the best time to look out for signs of Leaf Cutter bees at work in your garden.

When we talk about bees, people often think automatically of Honey bees, but Honey bees are just one of about 270 bee species found in the UK. Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve in Eversley is a fantastic site for seeing some of them, with 199 species of bee, wasp and ants recorded.

Jean Cheadle is a Ranger with Hampshire Countryside Service, protecting wildlife at both Yateley Common and Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve. Hampshire County Council's Countryside Service looks after five country parks, two family-friendly farms and 3000 miles of rights of way. Income from visitors at the parks helps the team to protect over 7,000 acres of glorious Hampshire countryside

No ordinary nest

Ever noticed neat crescent-shaped holes on your leaves? It's most likely the Leaf Cutter bee



The Leaf Cutter bee carries sections of leaf back to its nest

Courtesy of Hampshire Countryside Services

Bees are important pollinators and we are doing all we can to support them. Rangers and volunteers at Castle Bottom have been working hard to extend the nesting grounds for pollinators like the Leaf Cutter bee, by creating 'bee banks' of bare soil, on south-facing slopes where nests can benefit from the maximum period of warmth from the sun. A mixture of small steps and large terraced banks were created back in February, taking

advantage of natural banks where possible. By March, there were small holes in the soil and bees were seen coming and going.

It's not just national nature reserves that can offer great nesting sites for bees. To encourage bees in your garden, choose a mixture of pollinator-friendly plants that flower throughout spring, summer and autumn. You could also leave areas of your garden wild and keep dead wood for nesting insects. 🐝

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Bundles of joy

Margot and family 'waste time' with their new arrivals this month

ILLUSTRATION: Lucy Atkinson

There's nothing quite like watching bonny lambs bouncing about the field at this time of year. Whilst the lack of sleep may have nearly broken me, lambing proved to be a welcome distraction from endless uncertainty and a constant stream of sobering headlines. I'm thankful that the nursery paddock is now full to bursting with bundles of joy to coo over, which is just as well as it means my midwifery skills can be put to one side for another year. I am not a creature suited to 5am starts, dear Reader. Although I have to admit that there have been some advantages to the daily dawn trudges to the field; it's felt as though I've had the world all to myself. This is what it has come to. The only way I can secure five minutes of peace is to don a coat over my pyjamas, sink into wellies and commune with the sheep whilst the rest of the farmhouse is still fast asleep. Definitely more effective than hiding in the downstairs loo with a cup of tea and my phone, dear Reader.

'She hasn't stopped bleating since and even though little Bluebell is definitely the runt of the litter, her mother couldn't be prouder'

The proof is in the pudding as they say and it seems that the visit from a smallholding friend's ram was a success. The arrival of his offspring has pretty much doubled our flock. Names have been hotly contested as each was welcomed into the world. 2020 is the year of B names as Angus, the only lamb from last year, started off our very own Shetland alphabet. To be honest, I should know better than to let Jerry and the girls have a say. After much debate, Meryl Sheep now has a strapping son called Brian.



ILLUSTRATION: LUCY ATKINSON

Honestly, who names a lamb Brian? As if we need yet further reasons for our farming neighbours to laugh at us. Myrtle's brood followed with a Basil. Checking on the maternity wing an hour later, we found that Basil had been joined by a twin sister, Bunty, who arrived under cover of darkness much to our surprise as Myrtle showed no sign of having twins.

Delivery news was bittersweet for our favourite ewe, Betsy. Her first lamb was born sleeping and despite all my best efforts, I couldn't revive him. A second followed swiftly, her mother's daughter in both looks and lungs. She hasn't stopped bleating since and even though little Bluebell is definitely the runt of the litter, her mother couldn't be prouder. Whilst the jury is still out on names for Molly's lambs, Poppy is determined to knight them Bramble and Beowulf. Anything to keep her happy before she tells her whole class how we castrate the boys. They've only just got over the fact that Poppy told them that the lambs would all be Sunday lunch one day. Looks like Jerry and I have raised a proper country girl.

With everyone at home, the girls have made lasting memories of sneaking into the shed for cuddles with the lambs and trips up to the field before bedtime; rewarded with Brian and his woolly gang of toddlers putting on a show as they gambol about and terrorise their mums. I've come to think of them as rather beautiful timewasters. Nature never ceases to amaze and despite most of the ewes being first time mums, they have coped brilliantly with little intervention needed from their hopeless trainee shepherdess. Without wanting to jinx things though, could it be that I'm starting to get the hang of this sheepling lark? Maybe. Although Jerry insists that proper farmers don't call all their sheep darling. He may have a point, dear Reader. 🐑



Read more: You can read Margot's blog at margottriesthegoodlife.com and follow her antics on twitter @margotgoodlife. You can also find out more about Margot on her profile at hampshire-life.co.uk



Winchester marks the western end of the South Downs National Park, and likewise the South Downs Way National Trail. But, as a glance at the Ordnance Survey map reveals, several other long distance paths also either finish at or pass through the city including St Swithun's Way, the Itchen Way, Allan King Way, Three Castles Path, Clarendon Way and the Pilgrims' Trail. While each can obviously be undertaken as a linear route (either as a multi-day walking trip or on an ad hoc basis in stages) there is ample scope for devising a wide variety of circular walks combining stretches of them with other paths.

The 31-mile (50km) Itchen Way, as its name suggests, follows the River Itchen from its source near Hinton Ampner, a few miles south of Alresford, to the mouth of the river where it joins Southampton Water. Initially the river flows northwards, then west passing the villages of Itchen Stoke and Itchen Abbas, continuing its journey south via Winchester. Along the river are many attractive and unspoilt villages, each with its own distinctive church. This walk, which starts from the quiet village of Itchen Abbas, situated on the northern bank of the River Itchen, a few miles north-east of Winchester, takes in a few of these varied churches. As well as that at Itchen Abbas itself, the church of St John the Baptist (Norman, rebuilt in the 19th century), there is St Mary's at Itchen Stoke (a striking Victorian gothic-style building, now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust), St Peter's at Ovington and St Mary's Church at Avington. This last, a red brick church, is virtually unaltered since its completion in 1771 and

Green and pleasant land

Follow the River Itchen on a circular walk from Itchen Abbas says FIONA BARLTROP



'This walk combines a fine stretch over the surrounding downland to the north of Itchen Abbas, returning along the valley from Itchen Stoke'

TOP: Three Castles Path signpost on Itchen Stoke Down

LEFT: Downland view along Oxdrove Way

BELOW: St Mary's Church in Itchen Stoke

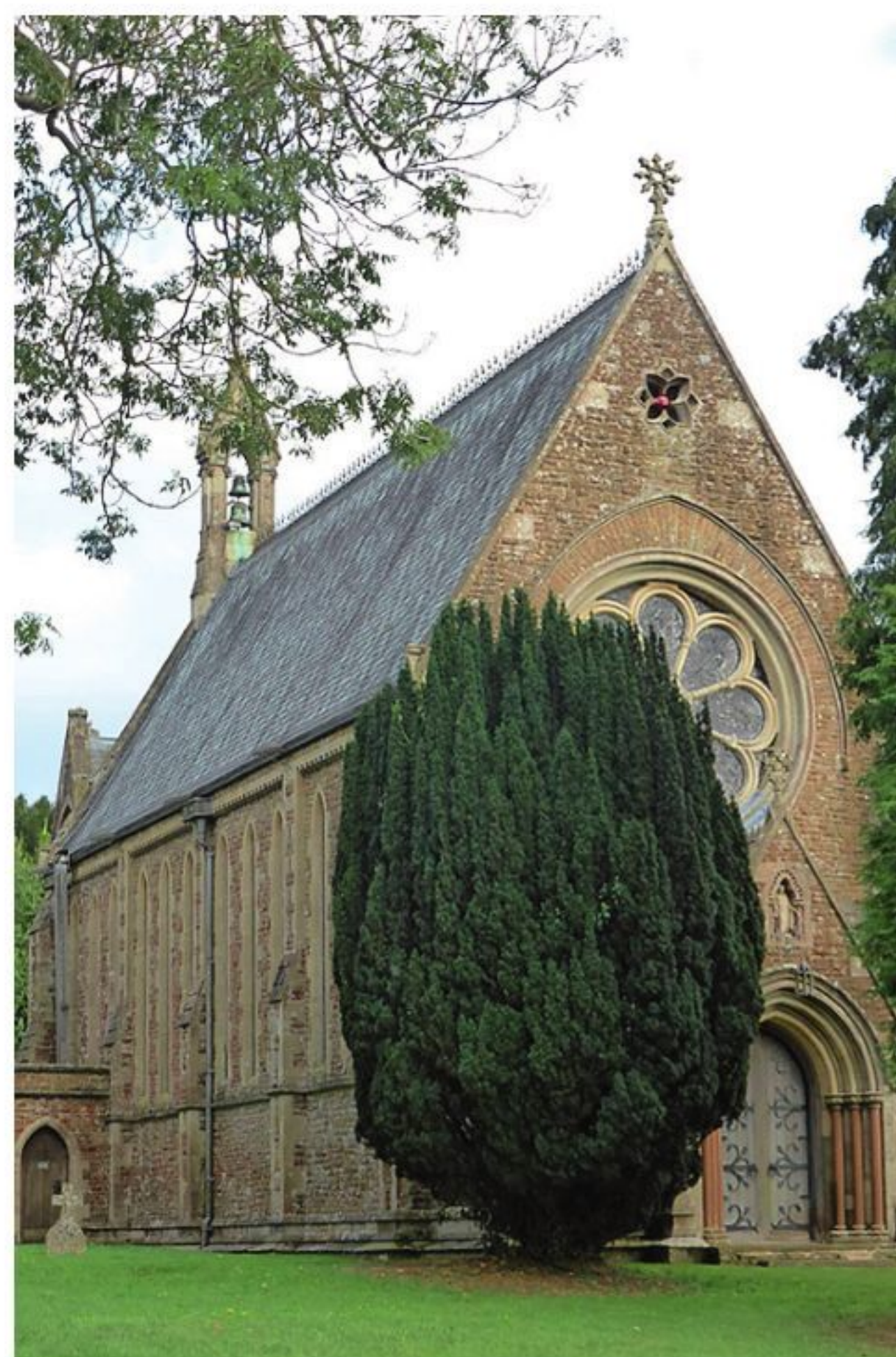
has an exceptional Georgian interior. A remarkable number of churches within such a small area.

This walk combines a fine stretch over the surrounding downland to the north of Itchen Abbas, returning along the valley from Itchen Stoke. The grounds of Avington Park, a privately owned stately home set in its own parkland bordering the river Itchen, are passed near the end of the walk. The house, grounds and tea bar are usually open to the public in the summer months.

THE WALK

1 (SU534328) Turn left along the B3047, then first right up the lane under the old railway bridge, and immediately right along the footpath beside a drive. Watch for the path forking left after 340m across fields to Rectory Lane. Turn left to the T-junction, cross the road and continue along the track/bridleway opposite gently ascending the downs northwards.

2 (SU537356) At the T-junction at the top turn right along the track, waymarked as the Watercress Way, although shown as the Oxdrove Way on the Ordnance Survey Explorer map. (The Watercress Way is a planned 26-mile circular route, but is not yet marked on the OS map. The Itchen Valley is home to the watercress



industry - hence the name of the Way and, too, the heritage railway.) Follow this south-east crossing a road and keeping ahead over Itchen Stoke Down. At a path junction (where five paths meet, including the waymarked Three Castles Path and Wayfarer's Walk) bear very briefly left then right to maintain direction to the next road.

3 (SU559339) Turn right down this quiet lane to Itchen Stoke.

4 (SU558324) Cross the B3047 and head down the lane opposite and along the path beside the River Itchen (waymarked both the Watercress Way and Itchen Way). Turn right across the river joining a lane by Bush Inn. Keep ahead to Ovington

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COMPASS
POINTS

Start/finish: Roadside parking near Itchen Abbas church, just off B3047 (SU534328)

Map: OS Explorer OL32

Distance: 7½ miles (12km)

Terrain: Downland paths and tracks, riverside path, quiet country lanes

Time: 3½ – 4 hours

Refreshments: The Plough, Itchen Abbas (01962 779191). Refreshments available to walkers at Avington Park Golf Club when open.

Public transport: Stagecoach bus 67 between Winchester and Petersfield via Itchen Abbas, stagecoachbus.com

Further information: Avington Park (01962 779260), avingtonpark.co.uk; visit-hampshire.co.uk

and turn right (or keep ahead to visit the nearby church if wished, then return to the junction and go left). Follow quiet Lovington Lane for about a mile (1.5km).

5 (SU547322) Turn left at a fingerpost uphill, bending right to follow the path (Itchen Way/St Swithun's Way) to Avington Park Golf Club. Turn right down to the lane. (To visit Avington Church turn left along the roadside path for about ¼ mile, then retrace steps.) To continue the main route, turn left then immediately right along the road re-crossing the River Itchen to return to the start.

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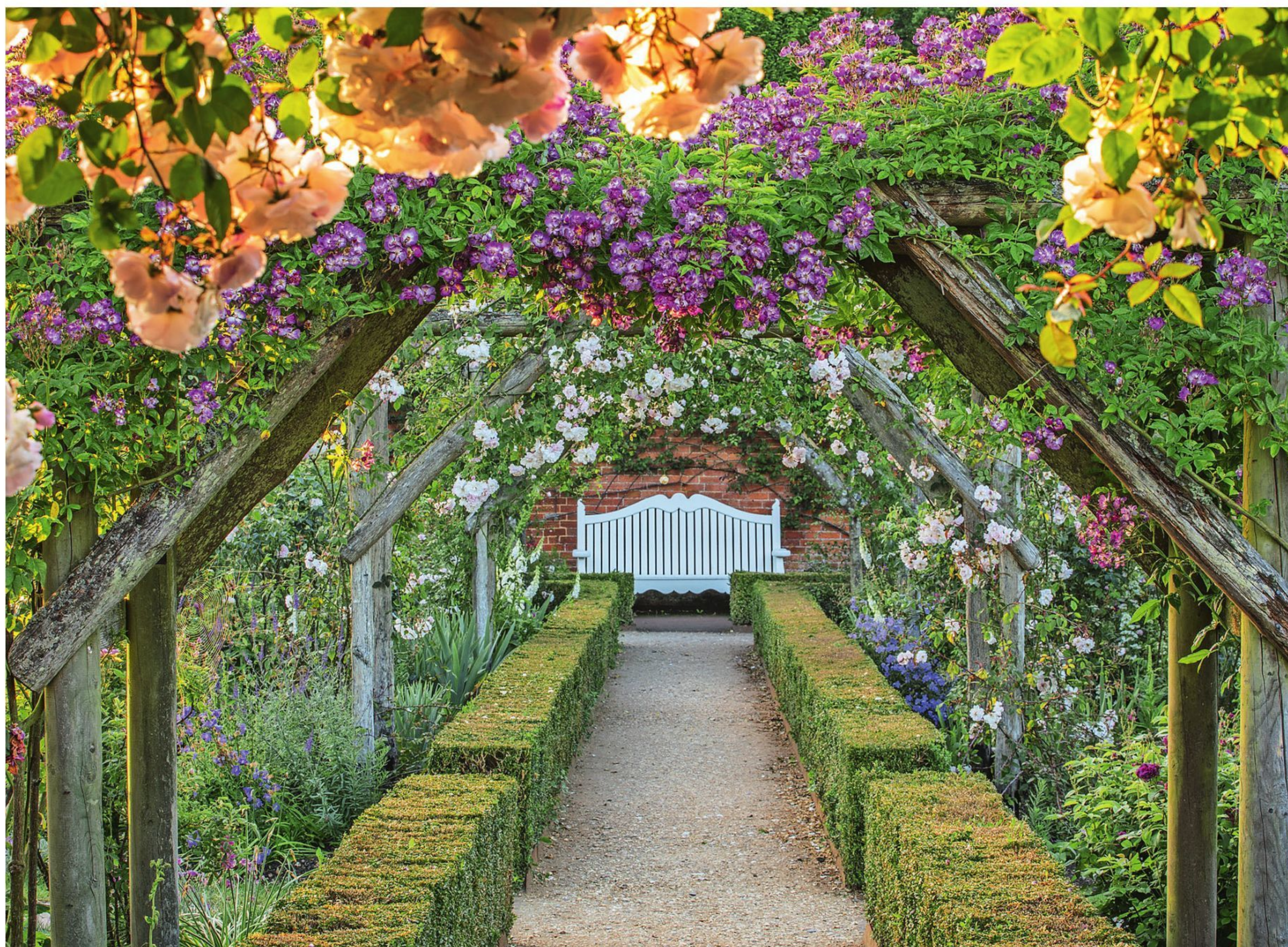
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31 days in JULY

As lockdown eases, ELIZABETH KIRBY compiles all the amazing ways to enjoy Hampshire now and in the future

[#ThereWithYou](#)

OUT AND ABOUT



National Trust Images, Clive Nichols

Mottisfont Abbey is famous for its national collection of pre-1900 shrub roses

National Trust

Hampshire's National Trust properties may still be closed but all have now reopened their grounds and gardens for enjoyment during July. Toilets and car parks will be the only facilities onsite available, and you do need to book online at nationaltrust.org.uk prior to your visit. The National Trust are asking that all visitors stay a maximum of three hours at some properties so check before you go.

Apples and pears

Hampshire's farmers markets are back, and we can't wait to browse the stalls once more of some of the county's finest food and drink producers. Social distancing measures are currently in place for Winchester, Southsea, Alton and Emsworth with more expected to be announced this month.

See hampshirefarmersmarkets.co.uk for details of further openings

Chris Moorhouse



Lord Montagu declares Little Beaulieu officially open

Beautiful Beaulieu

For cooped up kids, Beaulieu Abbey, its grounds and gardens are all open now to visitors. We can't wait until Little Beaulieu, the attraction's newest play area is open... but for now, experience the gardens at the best time of year in full bloom. **You need to pre-book your ticket online at beaulieu.co.uk before you travel.**

Family fun

Give the kids (and you) a break from home schooling with a trip to Mighty Adventures Crazy Golf in Hedge End. Discover a mythical land of giant sea monsters, mysterious shipwrecks and terrifying dinosaurs on the recently reopened course. **You can now book online at mightyclaws.co.uk to secure your spot.**

Great gardens

The NGS is back up and running, with beautiful Hampshire gardens open once more for visitors. To avoid overcrowding, you now need to book your visit online at ngs.org.uk before you attend. There are currently seven gardens to choose from, with more expected to open as social distancing measures are put in place.

On two wheels

If you've been itching to get out on a bike but don't want to commit to owning one, then you're in luck this month as cycleexperience in the New Forest opens again for hire. Escape for the day on the moor and heathlands of the Forest from £18.50 per bike. **Book your slot at cyclex.co.uk.**

Shop local

As non-essential stores begin to open up their doors, avoid the queues and head to some of Hampshire's market towns for some of the best independent shopping experiences. Think Bradbeers in Romsey, The Consortium in Winchester and Chesapeake Mill in Wickham to name just a few. These local names need your support, as the saying goes... 'Use them or lose them!'



Tom St Aubyn

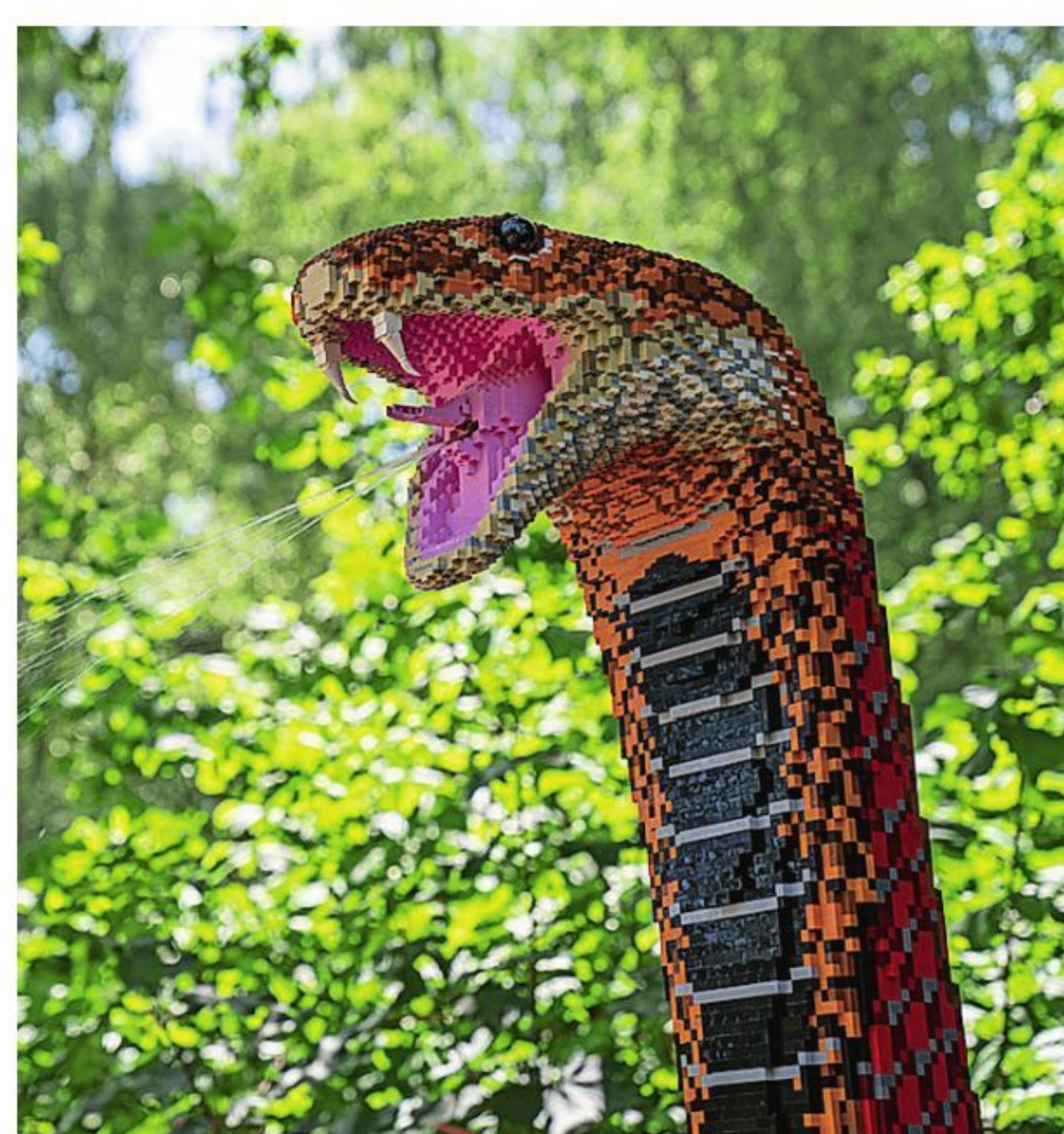
Black Chalk vineyard is wonderful in the sunshine

Take a tour

Hampshire's vineyards are really making a name for themselves on the international wine scene, and with many beginning to open their doors to visitors, now is a great time to see the vines for yourself and partake in a little socially distanced tasting.

Based in the Test Valley, Black Chalk is one to watch and will be opening on July 4 for tours as well as tastings and picnics. Keep an eye on blackchalkwine.co.uk for booking details and to order a bottle or two if you can't yet get out.

Marwell Wildlife



Discover a SUPERSIZED adventure at Marwell

ZOO DAYS

Just before we went to press, Boris Johnson announced that zoos and safari parks could open once more; a relief to all of Hampshire's wildlife attractions we have no doubt. First on our stop is Marwell Zoo in Winchester to see their brand new brick adventure, SUPERSIZED. Featuring up to 40 models of curious real-life creatures, from sneaky predators such as the venomous blue-ringed octopus to the aptly named assassin bug, these fearsome creatures have been magnified to an eye-popping size. **Book online at marwell.org.uk**

ART AND CULTURE

Go to the Opera

We may not be able to physically set off for an evening at the opera just yet...but that's not stopping The Grange Festival from bringing the opera to us at home. Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* will be available to stream from July 12 online at thegrangefestival.co.uk and there are plans for the rest of the festival to be available online also.

A little bit of calm

While galleries are still closed, Southampton City Art Gallery is there to fill the void with their online exhibition *Calm in the Collection*. Scroll through the gallery's archives as they bring together their most calming pieces of art as chosen by the members of the Cultural Services teams.

Southamptoncityartgallery.com

Open for art

Arches Open Studios by a space arts will continue this year online on July 11. Log on for a mix of live streamed events and content that can be accessed throughout the day with links to all the activities going live from 11am. A great way to virtually meet Southampton artists and to find out more about the city's bid for the City of Culture.

Aspacearts.org.uk

Culture on call

As we await the opening of our county's museums and entertainment venues, get your culture fix from Hampshire Cultural Trust's Culture on Call. An amazing website full of stories, poetry, interviews and more that should satisfy the creative part of our brains for a little while longer.

cultureoncall.com

WELLBEING

New for 2020

While everyone has been confined to their homes, the iconic Chewton Glen spa has been going through some major changes. Designed by Anita Rosato the indoor pool has received a full face lift, with new tiles and muted colour schemes to relax and reflect the hotel's countryside location.

There will be a new communal steam room and the hydrotherapy pool has also been transformed. The changing rooms and pool bar will also have a brand new look in time for opening post-lockdown.

Keep an eye on chewtonglen.com for updates on bookings.

Practice Pilates

Missing your group exercise class? Lymington local and owner of Coast Pilates, Rebecca Coetzee has made all of the Club's classes available online for people to enjoy in their own homes during lockdown. The subscription service costs £21.95 per month and provides unlimited access to a video channel which has lessons graded from complete beginner to advanced. Rebecca says, "The beauty of Pilates is that it is an exercise routine which is perfect for the very fit, through to those who are recovering from illness and injury and everything in between. All you need is a mat, a bit of space to stretch and a computer or tablet to get started, which is excellent if you are trying to find a way to exercise from home."

You can find out more and sign up at coastpilatesonline.com

istock/Getty Images Plus/SUNG YOON JO



Could your story make someone smile?

Tell your story

The Berry Theatre in Hedge End isn't letting lockdown get in the way of creativity, and have launched their online collaboration *Tell Your Story*; asking local residents to write a short story to bring a smile to the faces of the people in Eastleigh most affected by isolation. Visit theberrytheatre.co.uk for tips and advice on storytelling and information on how to submit your own.



Louise Flanagan

Practice pilates



Leonardo Worldwide Corporation

Heckfield Place are offering online talks and classes via Instagram stories

Water therapy

Taking to the water can help soothe your soul and connect you with nature following what has been an incredibly tense time for all of us. The new pontoon at Fairthorne Manor (ymca-fg.org) is back open for business. You can hire SUPs and canoes or bring your own and launch for £5 to enjoy the upper reaches of the Hamble. New Forest Activities (newforestactivities.co.uk) are also offering socially distanced courses along the Beaulieu River, perfect for wildlife spotting.

Good hair day

Something we are all dreaming of. With salons due to open this month, we're booking in to see Southern Hairdresser of the Year award winner Andrew Smith. With salons in Fareham, Gosport and Waterlooville, overgrown locks are sure to be in safe hands. Keep an eye on andrewsmithsalons.co.uk for updates and to add your name to their booking priority list.

Making scents

With lockdown putting a hold on trips to the salon or spa, Chandler's Ford based therapist Claire Osborne from Hiltingbury Holistics has created candle making kits you can do at home to bring a bit of calm and relaxation to isolation while you're waiting to book back in. You can also treat yourself to her

Plan your escape

Travel to far flung places may be off the cards for a little while longer, but we're keeping everything crossed for a Hampshire getaway this month. With many hotels due to open on July 4, we are spoilt for choice when it comes to five star breaks. Heckfield Place (heckfieldplace.com) is the ultimate retreat, offering excellent food, spa and countryside setting as well as their Assembly Events to base your stay around. In the meantime, check out their live channel on instagram [@heckfield_place](https://www.instagram.com/heckfield_place) for online talks and classes to get you in the mood.



Andrew Smith

Award-winning hair

hand-poured candles with scents such as sandalwood and black pepper, lavender spa and thai lime and mango. Visit hiltingburyholistics.com to order and to book treatments post-lockdown.

Switch off

Eastleigh's The Point has been helping people to relax since lockdown began with their Connection Point programme of online meditation, guidance and support. With lots of free to access information and workshops, it's a great way to take time out from isolation and feel connected to Hampshire's community. Find out more and join in at thepointeastleigh.co.uk



Abbotsbury Gardens

Layered LANDSCAPES

Ringwood pastels artist
Sheila Goodman is inspired
by her local beauty spots

WORDS: Sandra Smith ♦ PHOTOS: Sheila Goodman

If, like me, you typecast pastels as being the poor relation among the wealth of vibrant acrylics, traditional oils and other mediums available to artists, then here's your opportunity to learn from my misjudgement.

Just spend a few minutes studying Sheila Goodman's landscapes and we'll soon be on the same page. Now, don't you intuit how the depth and atmosphere she captures, the sunlight, trees and water, breathe life into your senses? Can't you almost hear the lapping of water, feel a summer breeze caress your skin, smell the morning dew? So, yes, I am now a convert to pastels. Not only that, I'm also marvelling at the serendipitous occasion which eventually led to a portfolio of stunning images.

"Back in the 1990s," Sheila recalls from her Ringwood home of 30 years, "I wanted to take some drawing equipment with me on holiday and found an old box of pastels. They were awful but a travelling kit of colour. When I returned I investigated pastels a lot more, bought some good ones and never looked back."

Previously devoted to oils, the qualities and convenience

of pastels make perfect sense to Sheila who is devoted to the dry pigments, pressed into sticks, which have been popular with artists since the 18th century.

"Not only do I like opaque media but pastels are also quick to use. I can stop and start any time I wish with no clearing up and I love the way I can draw with them, although I feel my work is a painting rather than a drawing. I'm layering colour, applied thickly or thinly, all the time. A lot of rough papers will take many, many layers and that is what I prefer."

Although art, and landscapes, were favourite subjects throughout school, Sheila's choice to study Graphics at college indicates a common sense attitude which recognised the need to earn a living. She recalls



Sheila Goodman



with contentment the following years working with design teams illustrating leaflets for graphics companies, before going freelance until the easing off of her day time job coincided with selling her artwork. Balancing the two for a number of years, she fulfilled her ambition to become a full time artist in the 1990s.

Overlooking her garden, Sheila's base is a west-facing purpose built studio. Here, stacks of paintings and art materials, a standing easel and tables overflowing with pastels are bathed in plenty of natural light. She finds no difficulty in sticking to a regular 9am-6pm creative routine and describes the process behind each image.

"I like to sketch a subject if I can using Caran d'Ache water soluble crayons, which are handy to carry around. By sketching, I get into my mind what I might aim for. Then I think about the size, and the type of paper as well. There's such a lot to choose from these days and paper can change the look of a painting."

Beginning with an under painting, Sheila lightly draws up each landscape in pastel. A yearning to include lots of detail dictates larger images. On the other hand, smaller scale pieces fit a need to be concise and abstract.

A regular exhibitor at London's Mall Galleries, this lifelong creative, who is a member of The



TOP: Evening on the Watermeadows
ABOVE: Pinewood Morning

Society of Women Artists and The Pastel Society, appreciates the validation that selling her work brings. And though the pandemic crisis has, at the time of writing, halted any exhibition planning for later this year, the lockdown seems to have affected her little.

"My lifestyle hasn't changed that much. I'm solitary and work on my own all day."

Thinking back to her earlier compositions, I ask how Sheila's style has evolved since moving to her adopted county.

"Ringwood is a lovely place; it's great to be able to get to forest or beaches. Initially when I started to use pastels I was very impressionistic, having studied the Impressionists at college. But I've always enjoyed learning and want to progress my work," she

concludes before adding, "I'm not always satisfied with the end result, which can mean changing the image. I try to be succinct and would like to abstract more without losing the essence of the landscape."

These landscapes are so intoxicating I'm helplessly drawn into them to the point that I almost forget about the interview. But, finally, still in awe of what is achievable with pastels, I enquire about Sheila's ambitions. The response is delightfully down to earth.

"To keep improving. If that stops, there's no point in painting."

Such an honest and canny self summary proves that this artist knows what she wants. And knows her medium. 🐼

Find out more at sgart.co.uk

The blocks are bold and bright, and each one is unique



From waste to wellbeing

When lockdown hits and you have 50 brightly coloured yoga blocks sitting in your spare room ready to be sold... you know it's time to launch your business. Here Jina Carnelley from Downward Duck tells her story

WORDS: Elizabeth Kirby ♦ PHOTOS: Jina Carnelley

Growing up in Kenya with a conservationist Dad, Jina Carnelley had always been aware of the environmental impact of rubbish washing up on the shores of Africa beside her family's campsite and tourism business.

Moving first to Devon, and then settling in Winchester, her passion for conservation and sustainability stayed with her; so when her sister Katie started working for an eco sculpture company, she was intrigued.

"I always had a real interest in conservation through my family and then five years ago my sister, who lives in Kenya, got a job working for Ocean Sole Africa who make the most amazing artwork and sculptures out of flip flops. From five metre giraffes up to life size elephants all out of waste flip flops, they make these crazy cool things."

Having seen the work that Ocean Sole Africa could achieve, Jina started thinking about what else could be made using the huge piles of flip flops that wash up on Africa's shores every day.

Spending time at Wanderlust yoga festival in London, Jina was inspired by all the different products on sale; but when browsing for a sustainable yoga block among the sea of eco-friendly mats and clothing, she realised there was nothing on



“The process is so labour intensive; buying one of my blocks in an investment in somebody’s life in Kenya. The story is the most important part”

LEFT: The blocks are made in Kenya by local people

MIDDLE: Jina Carnelley

RIGHT: Downward Duck is helping to support communities in Kenya with employment

BELOW: Downward Duck’s yoga blocks are made from waste flip flops found on the shores of Africa



the market. She explains, “When you hold Ocean Sole Africa’s products in your hands, they’re foam, and it has always reminded me of yoga blocks. I just thought how amazing it would be to upcycle something to make the same end product.”

Unfortunately, when she first pitched the idea to Ocean Sole Africa, they weren’t in a position to take on small scale items and so Jina held on to the idea as she went back to her day job at Itchen Valley Brewery.

“I thought if I couldn’t do it with them, I didn’t want to do it with anyone. I wanted not only to do it from an environmental point of view but also because it was working with my sister and doing something in Kenya that actually helps the people in Kenya that need employment.”

Jina’s life then took a different turn when she realised she was pregnant with her daughter Azora. Seeing her maternity leave as an opportunity she explains, “I thought ‘I’ve got all this time’, and Ocean Sole Africa had grown and launched in the US and were able to make yoga blocks so I was able to pour my heart and soul in to something that I wanted to be doing in the future.”

Once she’d researched the most popular block size, Jina was able to go back to Ocean Sole with her dimensions and the instruction to make the blocks in the style of their brightly coloured artwork. After working with the flip flop artists in Kenya, Jina returned home to Winchester with 50 blocks, each made with 21 waste flip flops, before the pandemic hit and lockdown set in. She remembers, “I’d been a bit scared to start the business I think, I had the blocks and it was all I talked about but I didn’t have the confidence to get it off the ground. Then my maternity leave ended in March and I thought ‘I’ve got to do it now or I’ve got to find a job.’”

With lockdown forcing her to spend time at home, Jina was able to focus on

launching her Etsy shop and Instagram profile to start selling the blocks she had at home already. She tells, “At first it was just my friends and friends of friends that were looking at the blocks, and then within the first week I had so much positive feedback that I wished I’d started my business ages ago. Everybody was so kind and encouraging and impressed with the idea. I was blown away with how lovely everyone was to me about it. Yogis from all over the world started to get in touch with me about the blocks and I knew then that I had a business.”

Jina has now sold over 150 blocks during lockdown, with more on order using over 3000 waste flip flops. She says, “I think the yoga community has boomed during lockdown, it boosts your overall wellbeing and it’s something you can practice on your own at home. More and more people are thinking about where their things come from and how they’re made and so for me, it has been a really good time to launch my business.”

Next steps for Downward Dog include launching different sizes and colours and working on social media to bring these unique blocks to a wider audience. There are also international wholesale orders being placed and collaborations with other sustainable businesses happening all from Jina’s dining room table.

Each block costs £25 to buy and Jina says, “It’s amazing how many people’s lives one block can affect and change in Kenya. They get picked up on the beaches by one person and then they get washed by another. They are ‘blocked’ or stuck together by somebody else, then carved and sanded before being washed again. The process is so labour intensive; buying one of my blocks is an investment in somebody’s life in Kenya. The story is the most important part.”

Find out more at downwardduck.co.uk

Sunshine state

Whether you can host on a big or small scale, embrace summer with these perfect garden party inspired looks

WORDS: Alisha Davis



Marigold tropical wrap front belted jumpsuit, £36, glamorous.com



Crushed pleated skirt, £59.50, oliverbonas.com



Pink floral print sleeveless tiered maxi dress, £30, dorothyperkins.com



Vero Moda - yellow 'Kleo' maxi dress, £38, debenhams.com



Valentino Rockstud flair leather heeled sandals, £695, selfridges.com



Yellow floral tea dress, £25.99, newlook.com



Elsie floral embroidery skirt, £45, monsoon.co.uk



Poplin top with bow, £25.99, zara.com



Tiji white tennis trainers, £32, missselfridge.com



Left: top, £25, shorts, £32,
sandals, £35; Right: dress,
£42, platform sandals, £29,
missselfridge.com



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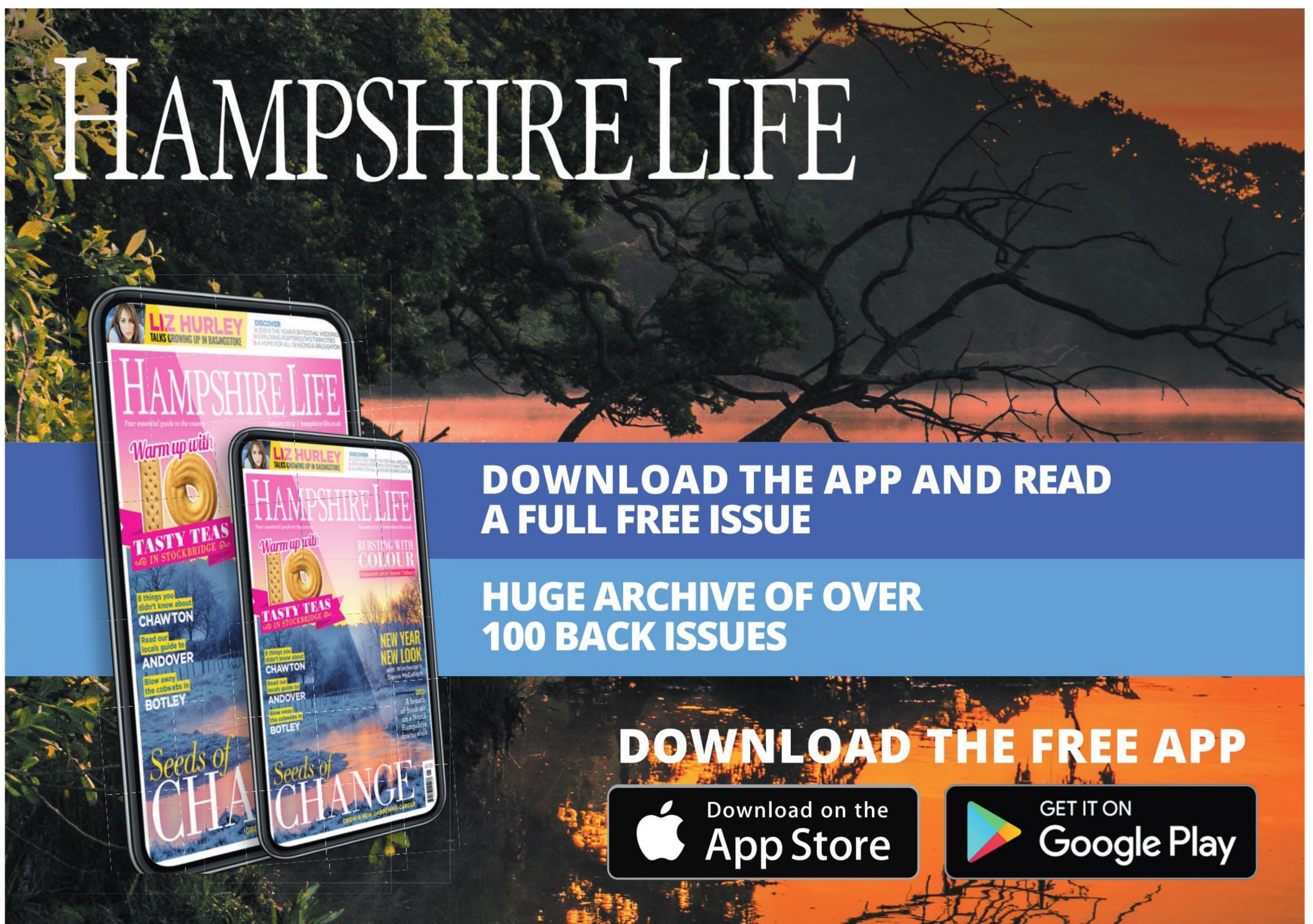
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THE CHEEK OF IT

Rihanna's titan brand Fenty Beauty has just added two new products to its range. The Cheeks Out Freestyle Cream Blush is available in ten different shades to give life to all skin tones, and it has been made with a lightweight, sweat and water-resistant formula that smooths over the skin without feeling sticky or greasy. Meanwhile, The Cheeks Out Freestyle Cream Bronzer is designed to bring out the best of your cheekbones to give a natural-looking glow, with seven sheer and buildable shades on offer. The brand has also launched a new Face Shaping Brush to complete the look.

Available at harveynichols.com and coming soon to Boots stores



SUMMER LOVIN'

Dreaming of imaginary beaches and far-away lands? Heinrich Barth's N.07 Mykonos range encapsulates the Mediterranean herbs that this Greek island is known for. A sumptuous skin softening body cleanser forms part of this range, which is infused with locally grown herbs including fig leaves, rosemary, lavender and basil. A shampoo for all hair types is also on offer, which blends mallow, honey, peppermint and nettle to cleanse the scalp, and regulate oil production in the follicles. Completing the trio is an ultra tanning oil, with a formula that delicately mixes the scent of fig leaf with other local botanicals such as sunflower, soybean, and olive.

heinrich-barth.com



A gentle touch

We're seeing an ever-increasing number of vegan and cruelty-free beauty brands, with the likes of Made by Coopers at the forefront. Founded by Clare Cooper, it is a modern apothecary that has been created to offer natural and organic skincare and home products, with a focus on emotional wellbeing. Made by Coopers have recently launched a new skincare range, which is 100% free from nasties such as parabens, palm oil, sulphates, artificial colour and synthetic fragrances.

madebycoopers.com

3 of the best PILLOW MISTS



Goodnight Pillow Mist, £15, nealsyardremedies.com



Perfect Night's Sleep Pillow Mist, £20, neomorganics.com



Relaxing Pillow Mist, £19.50, uk.loccitane.com

WORDS: ELLIE FELS

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GOURMET LIFE

Food news from around the county

STAY LOYAL STAY LOCAL

County food group Hampshire Fare is launching a new campaign supporting local producers and independent retailers as lockdown eases. Tracy Nash, Commercial Manager explains, "This campaign is a rallying cry! It is a celebration of the brilliant service people have received from independent retailers and local producers during lockdown. We want to sing out about all the good work that has been achieved so that people will stay loyal and others will consider using local as well. Our farmers, local producers and small independents are the lifeblood of this county."

AN EXTRA SLICE

Three Joes, the sourdough pizza and craft beer restaurant chain based in Winchester and Fareham has acquired the fourteen strong 'The Stable' pizza chain from Fullers.

Tim Hall, Chief Executive and co-founder of Three Joes said: "We've been huge fans of The Stable since we launched Three Joes in 2017 and this acquisition represents a significant step forward for us. The Stable is five times our size and we are confident the business has a strong future ahead."



SWEET SENSATIONS

We love coming across new food producers in Hampshire, and we particularly love it when those producers involve chocolate. Crane Patisserie caught our eye on Instagram with their delicately decorated desserts and chocolate bonbons and we just had to find out more. Owner Greg Olejarka has worked in five star and Michelin star restaurants and hotels around the world with chefs such as Gordon Ramsey, Marco Pierre White and Heston Blumenthal, and he is now

bringing his creativity to our doorsteps with his online delivery service based in Alton. During lockdown, Greg and his team have been providing the county with unique sweet treats which they handmade and deliver themselves. With clients such as Wembley Stadium and Hilton Hotels, quality is incredibly high and we've very much enjoyed indulging in a bit of luxury at home. A mixed box of 48 chocolate bonbons as seen here is priced at £25. Head to cranepatisserie.com to find out more.

Meat.Fire.Wine

Californian specialist wine importer and barbecue enthusiast James Hocking, has created a case of wine, comprising a selection of the Golden State's best loved estates, just in time for BBQ season. Andover based James' case includes a Talley Estate Pinot Noir as well as a red and white from the Napa Valley, Oak Farm Sauvignon Blanc and a Schramsberg Vineyards Rosé. All exquisite and perfectly matched to alfresco dining. James' top tips for the perfect bbq are to always buy the best meat you can afford, cook it simply and on a hot grill with a little oil and seasoning rubbed on to the meat so that nothing sticks. The case is on offer for £130 for six bottles at jameshockingwine.com



A classic on the coals

Give this deconstructed Caesar salad an extra layer of flavour with some time on the barbecue

INGREDIENTS

Serves: 4

- 4 chicken thighs, boned but skin left on
- 4 little gem lettuces, halved
- 2 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil
- 4 slices sourdough bread
- 1 garlic clove, halved

For the dressing:

- 2 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tbsp Old Winchester cheese, finely grated
- 3 tbsp good quality mayonnaise
- A squeeze of lemon

METHOD

1 Make the dressing by mixing together all the ingredients. Add a few teaspoons of water until you have a drizzleable consistency, then chill until needed.

2 Prepare your barbecue or heat a griddle pan until smoking hot.

3 Brush the chicken and lettuce on both sides with oil and season with salt and pepper. Barbecue or griddle for 3 minutes on each side or until the chicken is cooked through and the lettuce is nicely charred in places.

4 Toast the sourdough slices on the barbecue or griddle for a minute or so on each side, then rub with the halved garlic clove and drizzle with oil.

5 Arrange the chicken, lettuce and bread on four plates or a large platter and drizzle over the dressing. Serve straight away.



Susie Carter SUSIE'S KITCHEN

This dish was born of my new love of cooked lettuce and a long-term addiction for umami-rich Caesar dressing. Despite it having no place in the original recipe,

chicken is now a regular addition to pub Caesars and I really enjoy the extra texture it lends. The dish is at its best made on a charcoal barbecue; but will still be delicious on a gas barbie or in griddle pans on the hob. This month I'm featuring three producers who have been doing an incredible job of serving their local community with deliveries during lockdown. They're not alone; all across the county our farmers have been working even harder than usual to get top quality ingredients to the people who need them. The best way for us to show our gratitude is to continue to buy from them long after the supermarket stock levels return to normal.



FIND IT IN HAMPSHIRE

Chicken: Noah's Ark Farm
New Milton, 01425 638079
noahsarkfarm.co.uk

.....
Sourdough bread: Hoxton
Bakehouse Southampton,
Winchester & Lymington, 02381
785542 hoxtonbakehouse.co.uk

.....
Old Winchester: Lyburn Farmhouse
Cheesemakers Landford
01794 399982
lyburnfarm.co.uk/cheeses



WINES OF THE MONTH

What you should be sipping in July



2018 Château Langlet Blanc, Graves, Bordeaux, £17.95:

Bordeaux's whites are all too often overlooked.

This example is made with Sauvignon Blanc, offering tropical fruit aromas and citrus freshness, while time in oak adds texture and a honeyed, nutty depth to the wine. Exotic, vibrant and invigorating – it'll cut through the richness of the dressing and smoke-scented chicken beautifully.



2019 Berry Bros. & Rudd Provence Rosé by Château la Mascaronne, Côtes de Provence, £14.95:

When the sun is shining,

there are few things better than a chilled glass of Provence rosé. Our own-label comes from Château la Mascaronne in the rolling hills of the Côtes de Provence. It's delicately perfumed with enticing red-berry fruit and a moreish saline finish, that will play off the anchovy dressing.



2018 De Martino, Gallardía, Cinsault, Itata Valley, Chile, £14.50:

Cinsault isn't a grape we see enough

of on its own, yet it can produce juicy, bright-fruited wines that are deliciously refreshing. This fruit comes from old, dry-farmed vines, lending the wine its concentration of raspberry and blueberry fruit, and spicy, mineral complexity. You could even chill for 20 minutes.



Leon Reilly BERRY BROS. & RUDD

Susie's take on a Caesar salad – deconstructed and cooked on the barbecue – looks absolutely delicious. There are any number of options that would work here to complement the smoky edge added by the barbecue, and savoury richness of the anchovy

dressing. Given the variability of an English summer – you may want to go for a white, rosé or red, so I've chosen one of each. The only rule of thumb here is to have something relatively light – bold, tannic reds will overwhelm the delicate flavours on show.

These wines are available from Berry Bros. & Rudd's Warehouse Shop in Basingstoke, by phone on 0800 2802440 and online at bbr.com



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Small but mighty

We're spoilt for choice when it comes to compact crossovers, but the Seat Arona is one of the best

WORDS: Chris Pickering

UNDER THE BONNET

The pick of the range is the 1-litre 115PS petrol engine found in our test car. This feels punchy around town and its 3-cylinder thrum fades to virtually nothing when you're cruising. As standard, you get a 6-speed manual gearbox, which shifts sweetly, although a 7-speed DSG automatic is also available. Seat claims well over 40mpg for both versions and we came impressively close to matching that in the real world with 39.2mpg.

HOW IT DRIVES

The Arona rides and steers with an impressive degree of maturity considering its compact size. Our test car came in sporty FR spec, which includes firmer suspension and re-tuned steering. This helps the Arona to feel noticeably more responsive than the Volkswagen T-Cross or the Skoda Kamiq – both of which are closely related to it under the skin. You could argue that the FR setup is a good fit for the Seat, with its sharp styling and Spanish flare,

although it does introduce a bit of an edge to the ride.

The Arona is easy to drive, with light steering and good forward visibility. The view out the back is less impressive, thanks to the small rear window, but all barring the entry-level SE model come with parking sensors as standard, which means it's still a doddle to manoeuvre.

INSIDE

You sit just high enough in the Arona to get a taste of that 'over the hedges' sensation found in larger SUVs, while still maintaining the ease of access that comes from a small car. However, the greatest benefit of this upright layout is space; there's enough room for tall adults to get comfortable in the back, while the boot volume is actually larger than you'd find in a conventional hatchback from the next size up.

The interior design is pleasingly minimalist, with all of the entertainment functions controlled by a central touchscreen. Most models come with an 8-inch colour

screen, complete with built-in navigation and smartphone connectivity. Mid-spec models onwards get a BeatsAudio stereo system. The only area where you can sense the pennies being saved is the materials. The plastics are more than up to the job, but some of them do feel a little bit brittle. Overall, though, the Arona offers an impressive amount of car for the money.

FINAL SAY

The Arona strikes an appealing compromise, with small car running costs allied to the practicality and refinement that you'd normally associate with the next class up.


SPEC AND TECH

Price: Seat Arona FR £21,630 as tested (range from £18,330)

Engine: 999cc, 115PS, 3-cylinder petrol engine with 6-speed manual transmission

Performance: 0 to 62mph in 9.8 seconds; top speed 118mph

Fuel economy: 43.5mpg

CO2 emissions: 131g/km 

With the upsurge of people spending more time in their gardens, lockdown has been a good opportunity to really get to know your conditions and what works best in your soil.

Mother Nature has been really prevalent in our minds this year, from the floods of winter, through the warmer than usual spring, to the predictions of continuing hot, dry summers. Working with nature means adapting to our changing world, which is bringing increased heat, as well as periods of both drought and heavier rain.

Making our gardens more resistant to drought is becoming more important, by considering plant choices, soil cultivation and maintenance needs. For hot, dry summers, evoking the Mediterranean is one way to experiment with an array of different plants; whether creating a little corner that conjures up that holiday feeling we are all needing, or transforming larger areas to decrease the need for watering. In fact there are already many plants we grow in our gardens from the Mediterranean region as the UK climate of warm, dry summers and mild winters, particularly in the south, is very

suitable for a range of choices.

We don't need to dig up our existing gardens but rather augment with some robust choices. The right plant in the right place is particularly important, so do really get to know your soil and climatic conditions.

The Royal Horticultural Society believes that plants and their placement hold the key to mitigating some of our biggest environmental threats. Many drought-resistant plants naturally form communities of plants that thrive in the same conditions. There are certain characteristics to look out for. Grey-green and silver leaves reflect the sun's rays, conserving moisture in the plant; small narrow leaves are another indicator as they transpire less water; and reflective, glaucous, waxy coatings are adaptations for surviving in hot, dry environments. It's also a good idea to plant immature, small plants as they will be more resilient and adapt as they grow.

Prepare the ground by cultivating deeply, adding in some grit and organic matter to accommodate the free-draining plants. Raised beds are useful to increase drainage. Before planting soak the plants in a



Too HOT to *handle?*

Work with nature to create glorious gardens that
will withstand our Great British weather

WORDS & PHOTOS: Leigh Clapp



Raised beds in Jane Jordan's garden aid drainage and are easier to maintain

bucket of water until bubbles rise to the surface. Thoroughly water in plants for the first season and then once established, they will be more drought resistant. Planting 'en masse' to cover the ground preserves the soil from being washed away, keeps weeds down and retains humidity in the soil as a reservoir for periods of drought. Mulching with pebbles or gravel will reflect the heat and light, keeping roots moist and cool as well as suppress the weeds. Further wellcomposed green mulches applied each year will keep roots protected and fertilise the plants. Keep an eye on the health of the plants, if they seem a bit stressed from the heat, give them a good watering and keep on top of pests.

Garden designer Adam Vetere has developed a range of micro-climate areas in his garden, Old Camps at Headley.

"With our changing climate,



Echinacea are robust in heat and cold

both the desert garden and Mediterranean terraces are becoming increasingly sustainable. Both were planted in 2011 and they haven't been watered since, apart from the bedding in period, plus the maintenance is minimal too. I normally give the plants a prune every three years and that is that!" he comments.

Get the look

1. Water is a limited and valuable resource, collect rainwater in tanks and water butts and be waterwise.

2. Drought-resistant Mediterranean plants prefer free draining ground so don't plant on a site that is waterlogged in winter.

3. A south facing site with sun all day, and also in winter, away from frosty cold air is ideal.

4. A gravel garden is a great option – low maintenance and no lawn to mow! Select a sunny, well-drained, weed-free area and although any soil type is possible, a sandy or gravelly soil works best.

5. Silver leafed plants may succumb to wet, cold winters, but many are easy to propagate and will grow quickly for summer displays.

6. Choosing plants that tolerate hot, dry conditions ensures colour through to autumn, such as eryngium, perovskia, cistus, helichrysum, salvias and lavender.

7. Using different plants may mean that the feel of the garden will change, but dramatic plantings can easily be achieved from plants that have very low moisture and maintenance demands.

8. Don't be afraid to prune and clip rosemary, lavender and cistus after flowering, they can become leggy and woody very quickly and an annual trim will prolong their lives.

9. With the vagaries of the British weather, include plants that stand up to the heat and also cope with the cold and wet as well, such as birch, berberis, geraniums, miscanthus grasses, sedums, geums and daylilies.

10. Effective drainage is the key to resolving winter wet, including using permeable surfaces.

Some of Adam's recommended plants include *Trachycarpus fortunei* (Chusan palm), figs, *Chamaerops humilis* (dwarf palm), olives, yucca, agapanthus, echeveria, aloes and cordyline.

"With fierce drainage underneath, the plants are extremely hardy, with the olives and palms surviving -15c. We are also installing a rainwater harvesting system which collects water from our roof, with a 10,000 litre tank which will irrigate the remaining areas of the garden very efficiently, thus cutting our water usage and reducing our waste.

"As far as surfaces, consider a SuDS (sustainable drainage system) surface, such as gravels, resin bound gravel or clay pavers laid tightly, but without grout. The sub base must be type 3 to allow drainage," he explains.

I also chatted to head gardener John Wood from the National Trust's Hinton Ampner, about the climatic challenges we face.

"The problem is that we are getting more extremes and less predictable seasons. Hot sun and drought one week and then torrential downpours the next, and strong winds on a regular basis. Good plant husbandry has never been as important to combat these extremes. You can get the best idea of what's in store as far ahead as you can. Gardening activities can then be planned to optimise weather conditions. Planting can be timed to coincide with rain coming or be prepared to protect your plants



"The problem is that we are getting more extremes and less predictable seasons. Hot sun and drought one week and then torrential downpours the next, and strong winds on a regular basis"



Garden notes

Some NGS and National Trust gardens are now beginning to open. You can keep an eye on their websites to find out what you can visit and when.

Old Camps, Headley opens through the National Garden Scheme, ngs.org.uk

Adam Vetere Gardens, adamvetere.co.uk

Hinton Ampner, nationaltrust.org.uk

Jane Jordan garden design, janejordangardens.co.uk

Anne Keenan garden design, annekeenan.co.uk



if temperatures suddenly drop. Cover the ground with plants to prevent erosion and keep the soil cool. If you look around your local hedges, woodland and wild places you will see that in the natural world plants do not grow in isolation from bare soil. They form a community, growing through each other fighting for light by creating a canopy of trees, mid-storey of shrubs and then ground cover planting with thick mulch, which is important for a healthy mycorrhizal community," he advises.

Other tips John suggests are to build on what does well in your garden and locally, to find further robust cultivars of those species, such as the versatile options of different euphorbias; which include ground covers and ones for shade or sun.

"Some plants seem bulletproof and adaptable to a variety of situations. *Parrotia persica* (Persian ironwood) is a lovely tree that we grow at Hinton Ampner. Despite being in the Hamamelidaceae family it is quite happy in the chalky dell.

Parrotias also seem very resilient to honey fungus and we have a very healthy specimen in the church bed where many other trees have died. Gardeners are very resourceful, and this will ultimately prevail in these times of change. Experimenting with different plants, creating little microclimates of interest and dealing with whatever the weather throws at us in the future," he adds.

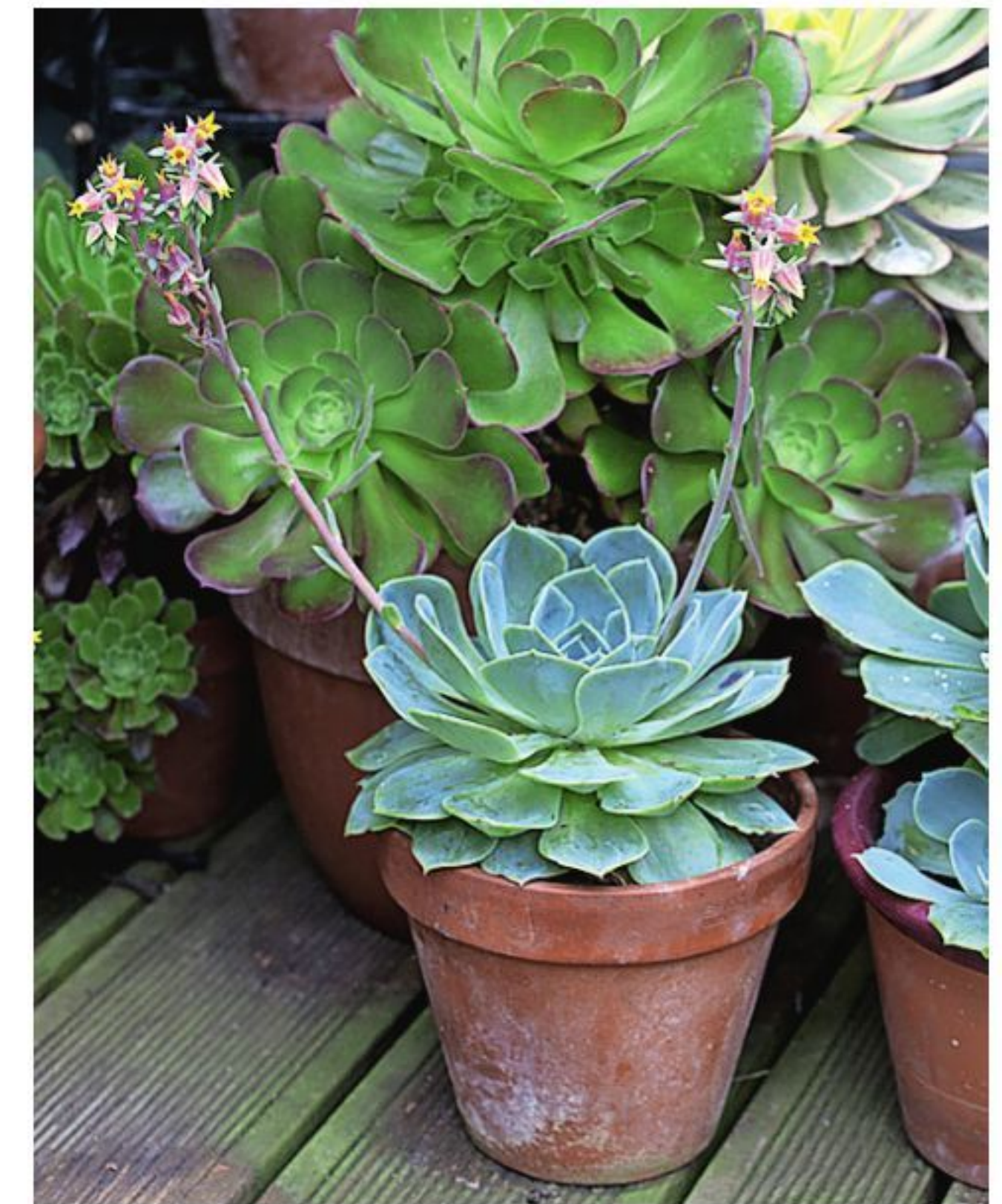
Jane Jordan has been designing gardens in Hampshire over the past eleven years and feels the starting point has to be really getting to know your soil, improving it where needed and adding organic matter when planting.

"Planting in spring or autumn is always best as it gives plants time to get their roots down before putting on growth and coping with hot weather. However, if you can't avoid planting in warmer weather then the 'puddling in' technique will really help. I tried this out last year and it worked a treat; with no additional watering needed

TOP LEFT: Be brave for dramatic effects

TOP RIGHT: Succulents are drought tolerant and easy to propagate

LEFT: Drought tolerant design by Jane Jordan with stipa, hebe and *Verbena bonariensis*



after the plants went into the ground. It involves digging the hole, then dumping a whole bucket of water straight into it, then plunging the plant into the water, before backfilling. Lightly press the soil down but don't heel in. No surface watering is needed and resist the temptation to do so; you need to grow your plants 'hard' so that they can tough out difficult conditions and resist pest attacks.

"Wind-proofing is another important factor, as wind is very drying and can scorch plants. Windbreaks in the form of hedges or climbing plants are ideal, and consider the prevailing wind direction when putting plants in, creating buffers with sturdier plants where you can and staking where needed," she comments.

Garden designer, Anne Keenan, who is based in Goodworth Clatford, offers some further tips to help weatherproof your garden.

"Use *Euphorbia palustris* instead of *E. wulfenii* where winter conditions are wet and you want a lime green colour in spring. When paving include roomy open joints and fill with gravel to aid drainage. Once you've assessed your garden conditions carefully and selected plants, also give thought to ornamental detailing and enjoying the space. Terracotta pots filled with zingy flowers, climbers scrambling freely over walls and dappled shade from vine-clad pergolas will contribute to the mood. Water features are a lovely way to add shimmer and sound and include lifestyle elements such as seating and dining spaces." 🐸



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GARDEN MASTERCLASS

Gardener and broadcaster **Toby Buckland** delivers his expert advice



A rose geranium, a key part of a colourful summer garden



Train cucumber stems up string or wigwam supports

In the long run

We're in the midsummer purple patch thanks to the abundance of buddleia, lavender and Jackmanii clematis, and that time in the year when watering pots and establishing plants is essential.

Roses, tomato and potato leaves like to be kept dry as this reduces the risk of disease, while clematis roots thrive under mulch that keeps the earth around them permanently moist.

Then there are flowers that are slow to

a thirst; pelargoniums – geraniums to you and me – and lavenders that become more pungent when it's dry, and buddleias that love sun and happily survive on meagre water rations.

That said, if you give the roots a good soak, your buddleia will have enough to top-up reserves of nectar in the tubular flowers, increasing the chance of a butterfly fluttering-by, one of the summer sights I am sure we all love.

Plant of the Month: **Lavender**



Lavender loves sun and free-draining soil, so if you garden on clay grow yours in pots. Prune English lavender (pictured) twice a year, removing the spent blooms and a few inches of the stem after flowering. Like all scented herbs, the aromatic foliage of lavender keeps pests that don't like its flavour at bay, but that's not its only purpose. In its native Mediterranean home, the drying combinations

of heat and windy weather would soon kill the leaves if the perfume wasn't there to protect the plants. On sunny days the oil-based aroma rises from the foliage surrounding the needle-like leaves in a thick 'fog' of oily air. This slows the breeze and reduces the rate at which moisture is wicked away by the breeze. That's why on a sunny day, you can smell a lavender hedge before you see it!

If you do just one thing... water plants in the evening to reduce evaporation and give plants the best chance of soaking up what they need.

WHAT TO DO IN JULY

Mix scrunched up newspaper when emptying the mower into the compost heap. The paper stops clippings from clumping together, increasing the speed that they rot down.

Trim the spent early cottage garden flowers such as cranesbill geraniums and lupins that have gone to seed. Then water and they'll bounce back with new leaves and often more flowers. Deadhead spent roses, sweet peas and penstemons to encourage new flowers to form. Prune wisteria, trimming the long whippy side-shoots to 20cm (five leaves) from where they meet the main stem.

On the veg plot train cucumber stems up string or wigwam supports, and remove the first fruit from courgettes and aubergines. This will feel counterintuitive, but stimulates faster growth and a succession of fruit through the summer. Pinch out side-shoots from cordon tomatoes – they're the ones trained to canes – and remove yellowing leaves from their base. Apply a weekly liquid feed to tomatoes, peppers and aubergines. Stop harvesting rhubarb, then mulch the crowns with manure or compost and water well. A little TLC now boosts reserves for next year's harvest.



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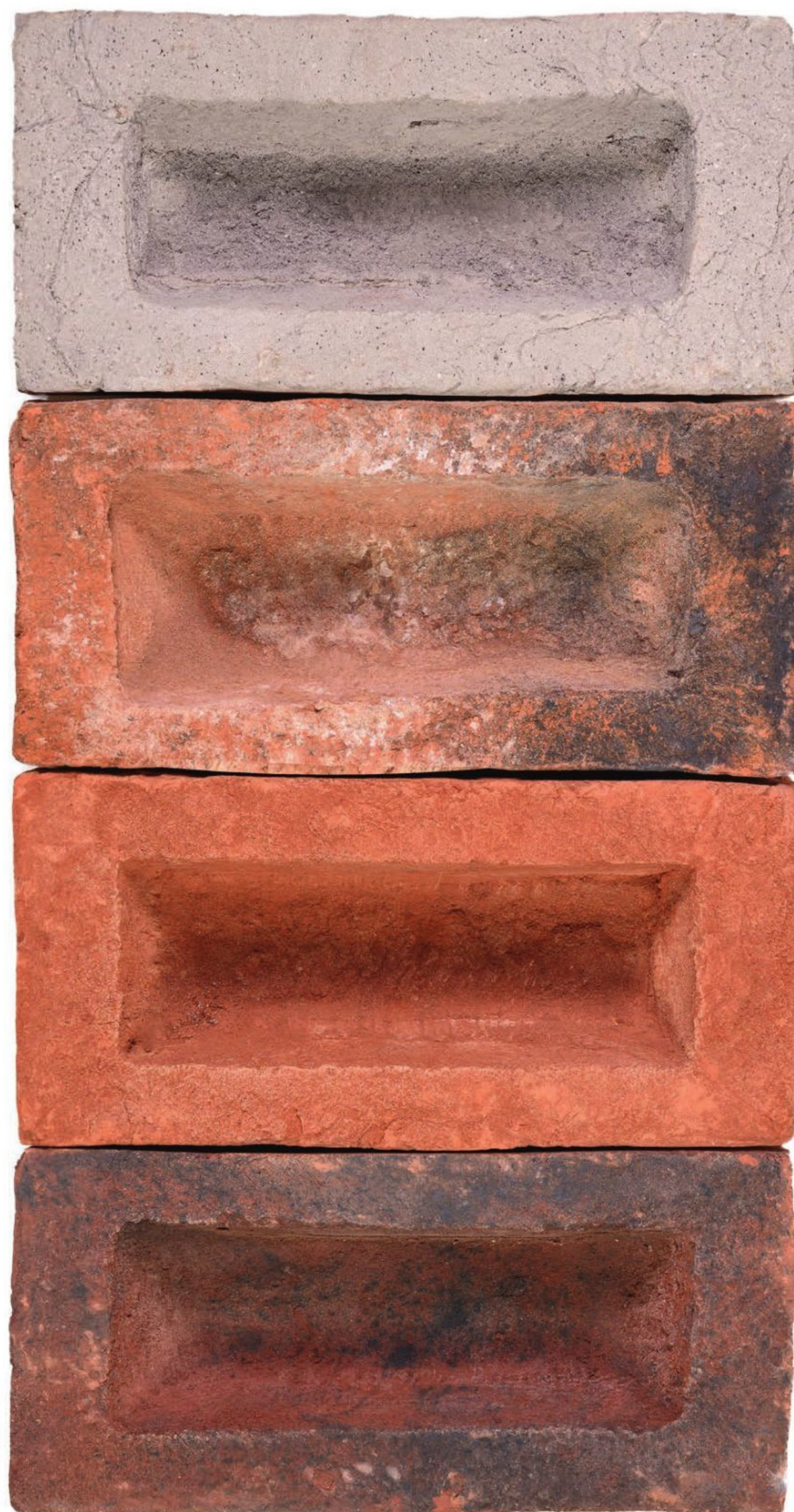


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Growing trends

The trends and products hotting up our gardens this summer

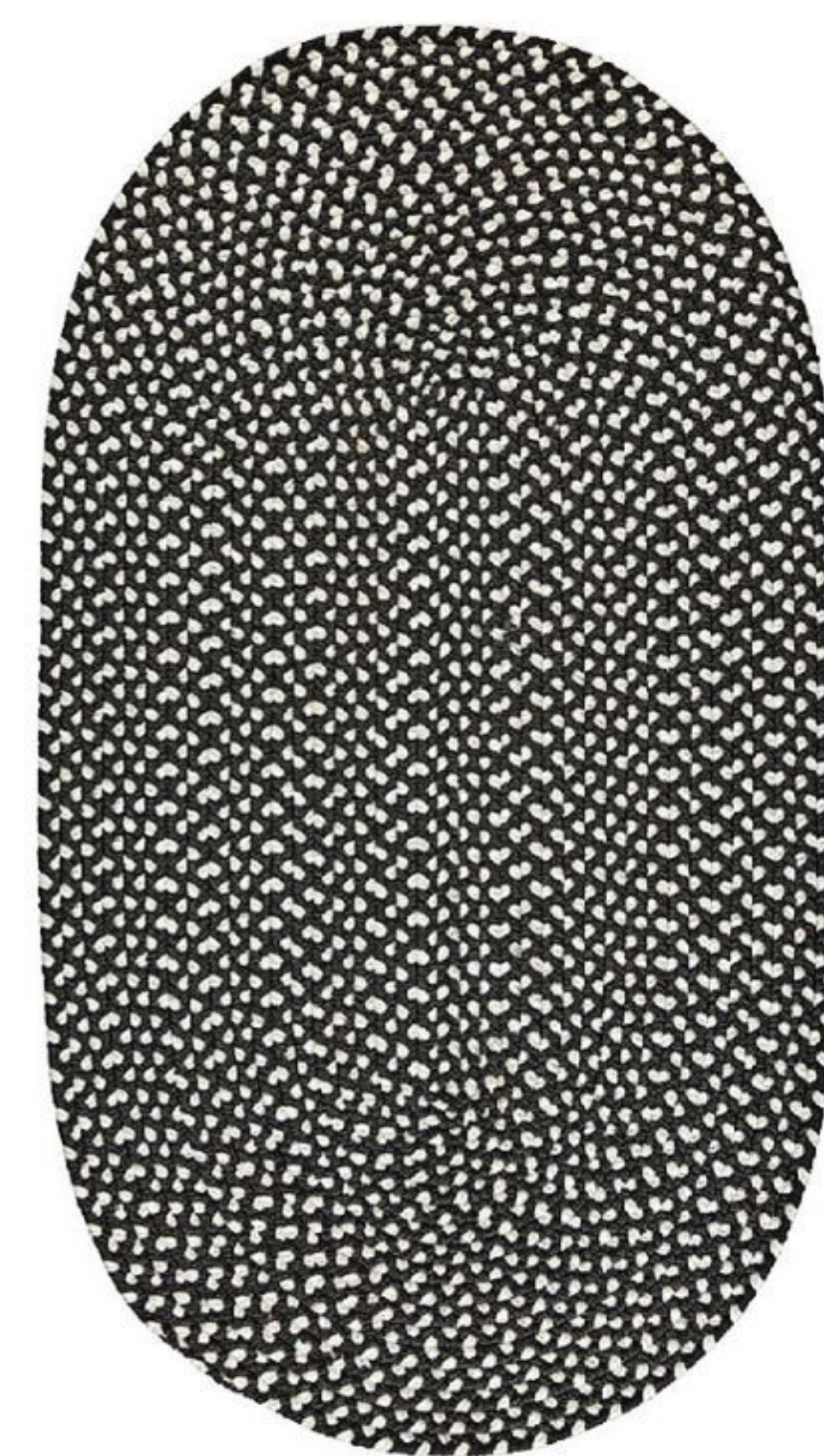
WORDS: Kate Houghton



Outdoor Henley fireplace,
£499.99, ivylinegb.co.uk



Luccombe dining chair, set of 2, £360, gardentrading.co.uk



Eco Soot outdoor rug,
£39, braided-rug.co.uk



Orb rocking lounger,
£58.99, vonhaus.com

BLACK OUT

The darkest shade works astonishingly well in the garden, providing contemporary style against a mass of natural colour



Eichholtz Bella
Vista chair, £1,290,
[sweetpeaand
willow.com](http://sweetpeaandwillow.com)



Antalya large fire pit,
£159.99, limelace.co.uk



Swara 2-seater garden sofa,
£349, made.com



Orla Kiely gardening gloves, £49.99, cuckooland.com

GREEN FINGERS

It's all about having the right tools to ensure success in the garden



ABOVE: Hawkesbury hand trowel, £12, round head pruner, £14, and hand fork, £12, gardentrading.co.uk

RIGHT: Seedball, £5.95, and Flora and Fauna gardener's gloves, £14.95, annabeljames.co.uk



LEFT: Nelly PVC garden kneeler, £17, raggedrose.com



RIGHT: Galvanised iron tub planters, set of 2, £89.99, limelace.co.uk

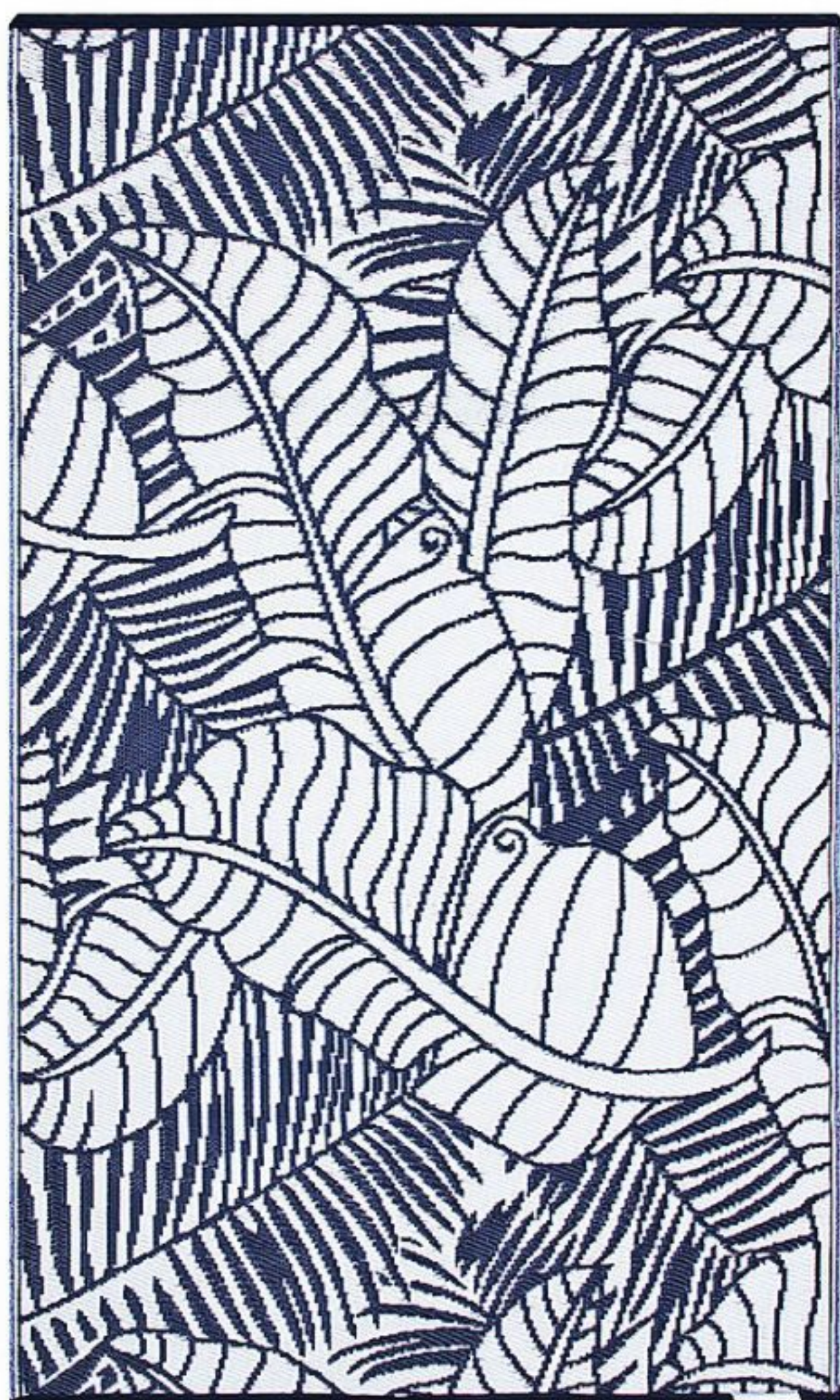


Galvanized Trug, £22.95, annabeljames.co.uk



Eichholtz Ocean Club planter, £1,490, sweetpeaandwillow.com





Manila outdoor rug,
£49.95, cuckooland.com

A TOUCH OF THE MED

There's something
about blue in the sunshine
that just puts a smile
on your face



Faro bistro set, £250, coxandcox.co.uk



Mesmerise outdoor
cushion, £59,
penelopehope.com

Pom Pom luxury
outdoor cushion, £17.99,
beanbagbazaar.co.uk



LEFT: Set of 4 picnic Bubble hi-balls, £12.50,
& Bubble picnic jug, £12.50, marksandspencer.com



ABOVE: Fleur De Sel lantern,
£95.95, beaumonde.co.uk



Two tone parasol, £175,
coxandcox.co.uk



RIGHT: Rocking deck chair,
£85, gardentrading.co.uk

Heat resistant
gauntlet gloves,
£16.99, thepizzaovenshop.com



Leather apron, £49,
procook.co.uk



Record pizza cutter,
£7.95, rexlondon.com



Ice bucket side
table, £99,
next.co.uk



Clementi Pulcinella
pizza oven on stand,
£1,699, thepizzaovenshop.com

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beer and pizza

Bee Enamel Bottle
Opener, £11.50,
athomeinthecountry.co.uk



Wooden pizza
peel, £10,
souschef.co.uk



Ooni Koda gas-powered outdoor pizza oven,
£249, cuckooland.com

Escape out or

Are you dreaming of escaping to your own garden den? Discover what's involved in creating an outside office, studio or retreat.

WORDS: Emma Caulton

HIDEAWAY

Forest Pond House
in rural Hampshire
is both a place for
meditation and a
children's den

Copyright Ben Blossom



Photograph supplied by Quality Garden Offices

Quality Garden Offices' log cabins are available in different cladding options, including low maintenance materials

once knew the owner of a group of Hampshire eateries who worked from the summer house in the garden of one of his restaurants. Lovely it was, too, on warm days. But in winter it was cold, damp and uncomfortable. His office choice was considered eccentric, however he said it removed him from the distractions of the restaurant environment.

Fast forward a couple of decades and how times have changed. The garden room is no longer a converted shed. Choices range from log cabins to imaginative, architect-designed retreats. With insulation and power, cabling for internet, underfloor heating, double-glazing, mini-kitchens and shower rooms; they also provide a comfortable space to play or work year-round.

Interest in these garden rooms has increased significantly recently as lockdown revealed that the in-vogue, open-plan home is, just that, too open-plan. The garden room or studio provides somewhere to escape to that's more cost-effective than extending your home or moving house. They can also be designed to be multi-purpose: a gym or meditation space in the morning, home office during the day, teenagers' hang-out in the evening and guest room at weekends.

THE DESIGNER RETREAT

Tom Lewith, Director, TDO (tdoarchitecture.com) was responsible for Forest Pond House, a one-off sculptured waterside retreat in a rural

Hampshire garden that provides a zen-like calm space.

Tom comments: "It is unusual for architects to be involved in this scale of design work due to the time it takes to develop a bespoke design. Therefore an architect's involvement can be disproportionately expensive unless undertaken as an experimental exercise – as we did for the design and build of the Forest Pond House. So, do consider whether it might be more appropriate to work with a competent builder to achieve your aspirations.

He advises: "Planning and building regulations should always be considered at the outset for any structures built on your land. Contact the local planning department for their advice on permitted development guidelines for what could be allowed without a full planning application.

And a tip: "Although mains power and water are useful to have, solar power and rainwater harvesting are more sustainable and should be considered."

THE TRADITIONAL OAK BUILDING

Robin Welland-Jones is Managing Director of Rookery Barns (rookerybarns.com), Oakhanger, specialists in traditional oak-framed, barn-style buildings often used as garaging and pool houses. They offer a comprehensive service from design and securing planning approval through to completion. Since the start of lockdown they've noticed an increase in enquiries about using

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their garden buildings as home offices, studios, recreational rooms and garden annexes.

Robin says: “One client wanted us to create a games studio/recreational room for his teenage children in the garden, so that they have their own space. It is a single storey oak-framed building with painted weatherboard sides and clay tiled pitched roof. Inside is oak flooring, kitchen area and toilet, and along one side of the building glazed folding sliding doors introduce light and allow the room to be open to the outside on sunny days.

“Another client, finding that he now spends much more of his time running his business from home, needs a separate office away from the house. We have designed an 80sqm single storey oak-framed building with oak weatherboard sides and a pitched slate roof. The L-shaped building will incorporate kitchen and shower room, plus workshop and store.”

They are also receiving more requests for garden gazebos, providing covered eating and relaxing spaces that allow people to enjoy their gardens rain or shine.

Robin advises: “Check that supplier quotes include



Photograph supplied by Rookery Barns

TOP: Customised cedar-clad garden gym for use year-round supplied by Quality Garden Offices

ABOVE: Since lockdown Rookery Barns have seen an increased interest in gazebos which provide entertaining and living spaces with shade and shelter, allowing people to make the most of their gardens

building dimensions, details of groundworks, windows, doors, roofing materials, insulation, electrics, flooring and internal fit out.

“A good design should always take into account how the building will be used. Will it be a studio, home office, gym, guest accommodation, garden store or outside entertaining space? Will its appearance complement the garden setting and main house?

And a tip: “Most oak-framed garden buildings will require planning approval although some may be allowed under permitted

development. Factors such as whether your property is listed, and where you’re located can all influence planning decisions. Obtaining planning approval can be time-consuming, so it’s best to use a supplier that has planning expertise.”

THE LOG CABIN

Lukasz Nagorski is Director of Quality Garden Offices (qualitygardenoffices.co.uk), supplying contemporary garden buildings that can be customised or bespoke to meet individual requirements. They range in



Photograph supplied by Quality Garden Offices



Photograph supplied by Quality Garden Offices

Contemporary style, cedar clad garden room, complete with external lights and interior downlights, from Quality Garden Offices

“Although mains power and water are useful to have, solar power and rainwater harvesting are more sustainable”

budget and size from 1.5m to 13m. Lukasz often works with small businesses, recently building a cabin to be used as a photographer’s studio and another as a print-maker’s studio. Since Easter and the first weeks of lockdown, Lukasz has noticed a dramatic upturn in enquiries about garden rooms.

Lukasz says: “I haven’t been so busy; ever! I say to people, ‘Send me a picture of your dream cabin or sketch the layout that you’re after and I’ll make it’. Garden offices and gyms are the popular choices: gyms because people haven’t been able to go to the gym [during lockdown] and garden offices because people have needed a quiet space to work. Another is a games room for teenagers – somewhere with a TV and pool table where they can play X-Box and shout and scream!”

He advises: “Most people try to have them positioned close to the fence as they don’t lose too much garden, so they have to be kept under 2.5m in height. But in larger gardens where they can be positioned well away from the boundary they can go up to 4m in height for a dual pitched roof.

“All my buildings are fully insulated so you can use them year-round. I sell each cabin with an electrical package, including downlights, external lights and power sockets. I get my electrician to visit the customer and work out how to power them up; for most of them he will run an armoured cable from the fusebox to the back of the cabin.”

And a tip: “I work with a company who provide air conditioned units that can blow cold or warm air inside. There are also apps to control temperatures.” 🐻

Checklist

- Garden studios can usually be built under permitted development rules. Generally the maximum eaves height is 2 ½ metres and they must be single storey with no full-time sleeping accommodation. Overall height cannot exceed 4m for a dual pitched roof or 3m with any other type of roof.
-
 - Outbuildings are not allowed on land in front of a wall that forms the principal elevation.
 -
 - Any outbuilding within the curtilage of a listed building requires planning permission.
 -
 - No more than half the land associated with the original house must be covered with additions or outbuildings. Anything else will require planning permission.
 -
 - Make sure that you don’t live in an area with restricted development rules.
 -
 - Use a registered electrician. Electricians should use armoured cable, be connected to your house via the fusebox and have their own circuit breaker.
 -
 - Check that your home wi-fi has sufficient range, otherwise you will need a range extender or powerline adapter that sends the internet signal through mains cabling.



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PROPERTY LIFE: ANDOVER

A rural escape

Redevelopment of this market town centre heralds a new era; now is the time to buy into Andover suggests EMMA CAULTON

Will the property market reopen to a post-lockdown exodus to the countryside? In May, estate agents were already reporting a surge in buyer registrations with a big demand for well-connected countryside around market towns. The expectation is that home working is here to stay, and buyers are looking to split their working week between home and office.

Purchasers planning their rural escape would do well to consider Andover – a market town that ticks many boxes. Property is good value, particularly if you're coming out of London and the Home Counties. You should be able to find a house with space enough for a home office and a generously sized garden for the children to run around – factors with increased importance post-lockdown.

Schooling is impressive. Independents Farleigh School (leading Catholic co-educational prep school) and Rookwood School (a non-selective for children aged two to 16 described as having “an ethos of joyful learning” by the Independent Schools Inspectorate) already attract buyers to the area. In addition, a swathe of primary schools in Andover and surrounding villages are rated ‘good’ by Ofsted. These include Andover, Abbotts Ann, Amport, Appleshaw and Grateley Primaries, and Endeavour and Knights Enham Juniors – to mention just a few.



The villages surrounding Andover provide a perfect rural retreat with country walks and old inns such as The George at Vernham Dean

‘Hedgerow-edged country lanes wind past thatched cottages with front gardens crowded with delphiniums and hollyhocks, rustic pubs overlooking village greens, clear streams and old churches – all set against a patchwork of fields and woodland’

There's also a sprinkling of ‘outstandings’, among them Anton Junior and Clatford Primary. At secondary level John Hanson, Harrow Way and Winton Community Schools are all ‘good’.

Commutability is excellent. The A303 to the south links to the M3, and the A34 to the east leads to the M4. Train services take about 20 minutes to Basingstoke and just over 70 minutes to London Waterloo. There are also mainline stations in villages west and east of Andover – namely Grateley and Whitchurch respectively.

Ah, yes, those villages around Andover. Chocolate box pretty and hidden down lush valleys, they are surely one of Hampshire's best kept secrets. If it's village life you're after, these are the imagined rural idyll of our dreams – unspoiled and untouristy. Hedgerow-edged country lanes wind past thatched cottages with front gardens crowded with delphiniums and hollyhocks, rustic pubs overlooking village greens, clear streams and old churches – all set against a patchwork of fields and woodland.

Travelling anti-clockwise, villages worth exploring around Andover to the east and north include Longparish, St Mary Bourne and Hurstbourne Tarrant. To the west there's Redenham, Appleshaw, Amport and Monxton. To the south the area between Andover and Stockbridge has always been in demand and includes Abbotts Ann, Goodworth Clatford and Wherwell. As

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Character cottage with John Lewis of Hungerford kitchen, attractive gardens and workshop/office.

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for property – choice ranges from barn conversions, country estates and quaint cottages to mid-20th century family homes and new developments in Andover itself.

So why has this area remained under many house purchasers’ radar? Perhaps it is because Andover itself underwhelms. Overdeveloped in response to London overspill in the 1950s and ‘60s, it is dominated by a confusing ring road and does not make the most of its riverside location or rich history. All this is set to change. Andover is on the brink of transformation.

Cllr Phil North, Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, grew up in Andover. He has an affection and appreciation for the town he calls home and is well placed to oversee its renaissance. For too long, Andover has looked tired and felt unloved – this despite the River Anton running through it and an historic core encompassing the elegant Greek Doric Guildhall, St Mary’s Church, Town Mills and attractive listed buildings along Bridge Street, East Street and High Street.

In order to deliver a revitalised town centre, the Council has brought on board Hemingway Design and NEW Masterplanning and already made a substantial commitment to this scheme by purchasing the Chantry Centre (Andover’s shopping mall and home to Boots and Waitrose). This purchase is part of a scheme to establish a new cultural quarter, developing Andover’s acclaimed arts complex, The Lights.

Overall the intention is to strengthen Andover’s distinct identity and establish a vibrant town centre with a focus on leisure, lifestyle and enterprise. This will include a new leisure centre in the town centre, a new riverside park and opportunities for creative businesses, pop-ups and start-ups.

The approach is radical and exciting. A new green ethos takes into account Andover’s compact size. Many live within a 20 minute walk of the centre, however the ring road presents a barrier. The plan is to reduce the scale of the ring

road, improving access and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, helped by the creation of a ‘green spine’ from River Anton to Vigo Park and better links to the rail station.

In conclusion: Andover’s future is looking bright. This area may not remain a secret much longer. For those in search of a country lifestyle close to a vibrant town centre with connectability, now may be the time to buy. 🐷



**FOCUS ON:
ANDOVER**



**NEXT MONTH:
Rowlands Castle**

LEFT: Amport is a much sought-after village to the south-west of Andover, home to the Hawk Conservancy Trust and the Hawk Inn



HOT HOMES



GOODWORTH CLATFORD

£900,000

Delightful thatched cottage full of character and features with pretty gardens.

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01794 511107*



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£500,000

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*Graham & Co, Andover,
01264 356500*



AMPORT

£725,000

Modern five-bedroom family home with attached studio on outskirts of popular village.

*Evans & Partridge,
Stockbridge,
01264 810702*

STAR BUY

LITTLE ANN

£1,650,000

Exceptional six-bedroom cottage in five acres with heated pool, tennis court, annexe and fishing rights.

*Evans & Partridge,
Stockbridge,
01264 810702*

AGENT TALK

Jamie Armstrong, Managing Director, Evans & Partridge

Following the long-awaited resolution over the Brexit impasse, at Evans and Partridge we experienced a brisk upsurge in market activity with a record-breaking period of sales between 1st January and 31st March. Until the Covid-19 pandemic brought in restrictions in movement, we continued to sell village and country property at a positive rate. Unsurprisingly lockdown brought a dramatic fall in new enquiries and during the first four weeks the market was frozen. As we neared the end of April, however, we observed a change in behaviour with a steady increase in enquiries from both sellers and buyers.

We are hugely encouraged by this activity. Employees and employers have realised that work, in many cases, can be managed from home. This, and the effect of being incarcerated at home for weeks, will foster a greater appreciation of space both inside and outside the home. This may well trigger many, who have long hankered after a more rural living environment, to revisit this notion.

There is also a sense that in the wake of

Covid-19, many will re-evaluate their priorities in life – with issues such as lifestyle and the environment coming to the fore – heralding an increase in relocating. In the longer term, city-based companies are likely to review the economic benefits of not pooling workforce teams into expensive city locations. We anticipate a trend towards out-of-town living as a result.

For those relocating, the Test Valley is a beautiful area and yet easily accessible to London. Here at Evans and Partridge, we are pleased to be building a bank of new instructions, with a portfolio of classic and contemporary countryside homes available to purchase this summer for that new life in the country.



East Boldre, Hampshire

Occupying a unique and stunning position overlooking Bagshot Moor and the open forest and enjoying approximately two acres of gardens and grounds including paddock, this detached house has three bedrooms and offers huge potential for updating.



- 3 beds
- 1 bath
- Approx. 2 acres of grounds inc. paddock
- Open forest location
- Huge potential



£1,100,000

Lymington Hampshire

A uniquely situated and beautifully presented top floor apartment within a premier gated community on Lymington Quay, enjoying an elevated position with spectacular views over the Lymington River towards the Isle of Wight.



- 2 beds
- 2 baths
- 2 receptions
- Spectacular views
- Easy access to the High Street

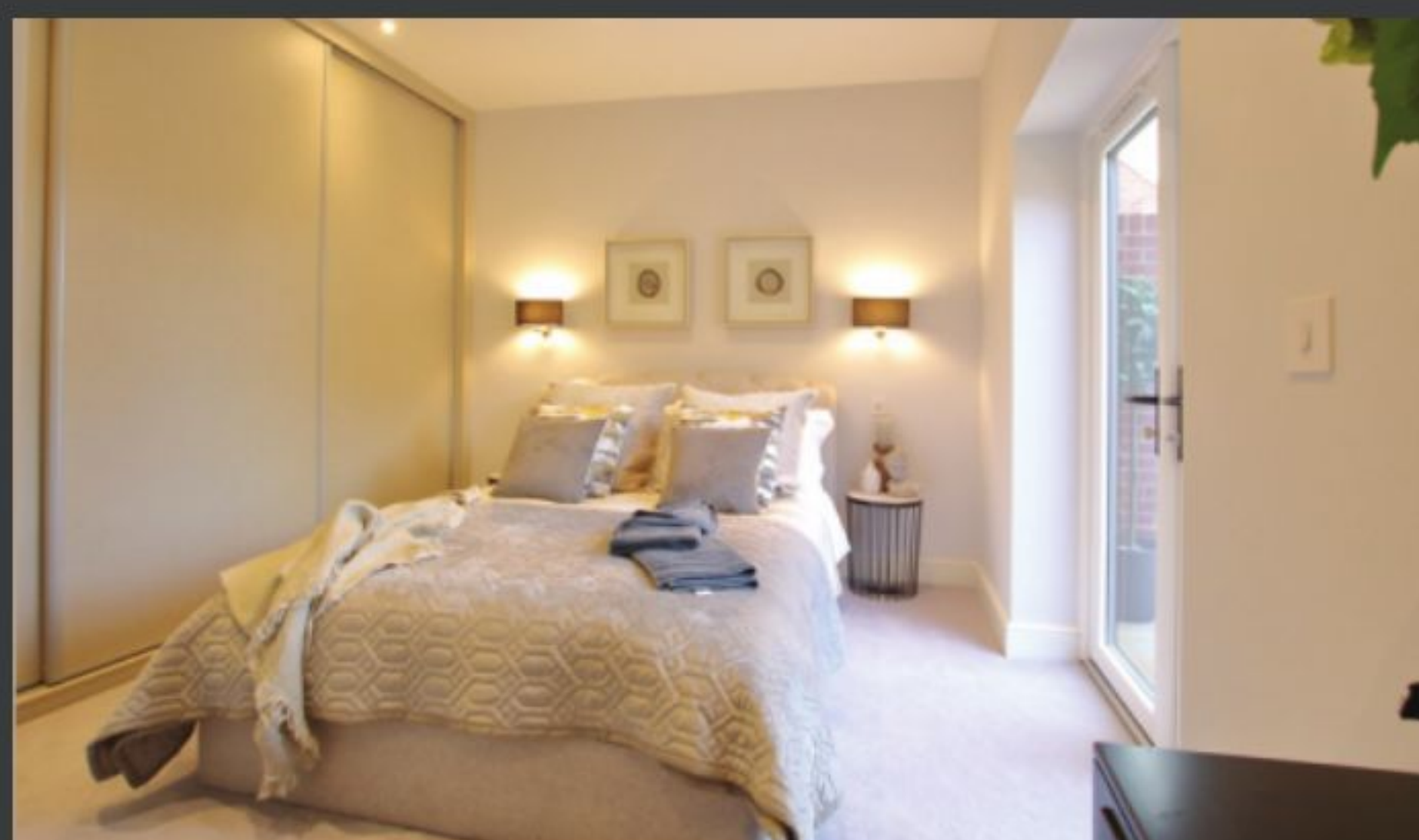


£750,000



Lymington, Hampshire

Built to exacting standards by reputable south coast developers, AJ Developments, this brand new and modest, open-plan bungalow has two bedrooms and two bathrooms and is situated in the centre of the Georgian sailing town of Lymington.



2 beds
2 baths
Walled garden & parking space
Brand new
Town centre location

£750,000



Lymington, Hampshire

A very well presented three bedroom detached modern house on this popular development with a south and west facing private garden situated south of High Street being close to the mariners and Yacht clubs. The property is close to all of Lymington's renowned facilities and Woodside gardens.



3 beds
2 baths
West facing garden
Drive & garage
South of the High Street location

£495,000



APPLESHAW

A classic period house of great charm and character with a brick and flint outbuilding offering potential for conversion (STPP) and a beautiful south westerly facing walled garden quietly situated on the edge of this popular village.



Porch. Drawing room. Sitting room. Dining hall. Inner hall/study. Kitchen/breakfast room. Lobby. Cloakroom. 4 bedrooms (2 en suite). Family bathroom. Coach house/garage with utility and loft room/home office. Parking. Stunning south westerly facing walled garden.

OFFERS INVITED £875,000



CHUTE CADLEY

An attractive detached modern cottage style house built by the present owner about ten years ago with manageable level part walled gardens, garage and kennels, situated in a quiet village setting within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Reception hall. Cloakroom. Sitting room. Dining room. Study. Kitchen/breakfast room. Utility/boot room. Shower room. Master bedrooms with dressing room and en suite shower room. 2 further double bedrooms. Bathroom. Large single detached garage. Large store. 3 heated kennels. Parking. Secluded part walled garden. EPC D.

OFFERS INVITED £710,000



CHUTE FOREST

An elegant wing of Chute Lodge, a Grade I Listed Georgian mansion, quietly tucked away within the historic Chute Forest and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The charming family accommodation is complimented by a large landscaped garden extending to about an acre.



Reception hall. Drawing room. Sitting room. Dining room. Cloakroom. Kitchen/breakfast room with mezzanine area. Freezer room. Master bedroom with en suite bathroom. 3 further double bedrooms. Large bathroom. Double garage with adjoining studio. Parking. Attractively landscaped gardens and grounds approaching one acre.

OFFERS INVITED £895,000



GOODWORTH CLATFORD

A most impressive modern detached house offering spacious and beautifully presented accommodation with a garage and detached home office/studio, standing in an attractively landscaped garden with adjoining paddock area, quietly situated on the southern edge of this highly sought after village.



Reception hall. Cloakroom. Living room. Study/play room. Kitchen/breakfast room with dining area and garden room. Utility room. Master bedroom with en suite shower room. 3 further bedrooms (one en suite). Family bathroom. 2nd floor: Bedroom 5 with en suite shower room. Loft room area. Garage/workshop. Detached home office/studio. Landscaped gardens, grounds and paddock area of 0.22 acres. EPC C.

OFFERS INVITED £895,000



LOCKERLEY

A substantial individual detached family house with spacious light and airy accommodation and a private westerly facing rear garden with stunning open views over the adjoining rolling farmland and countryside, situated on the edge of a popular tucked away Green in Lockerley.



Porch. Ent vestibule. Reception hall. Cloakroom. Living room. Dining room. Garden room. Open plan kitchen/breakfast room with family area. Utility. 5 double bedrooms (2 en suite). Bathroom. Integral garage. Car port with lockable stores. Parking. Landscaped gardens and ground of about 0.26 acres with westerly facing open country views. EPC D.

OFFERS INVITED £1,100,000



LONGPARISH

A large individual house with spacious and well-presented accommodation including a stunning garden room, standing in a good size plot (0.41 acres) in an excellent quiet location at the end of a short no-through lane on the edge of this highly sought after Test Valley village beside the Common with nearby riverside walks.



Large porch. Reception hall. Cloakroom. Drawing room. Dining room. Large conservatory/garden room. Open plan kitchen/breakfast room. Utility. Boot room. Galleried landing with study area. Master bedroom with en suite. 3 further double bedrooms. Bathroom. Attached double garage with boarded loft room. Oak frame car barn. Parking. Attractive landscaped gardens of 0.41 acres. EPC E.

OFFERS INVITED £1,100,000



PORTON

An individual modern house built to a very high standard by a well known local builder, offering well balanced and beautifully presented family accommodation in a quiet tucked away position whilst remaining central to the village and its amenities.



Porch. Reception hall. Cloakroom. Drawing room. Living room. Garden room. Study. Kitchen/dining room. Utility. Master bedroom with dressing area and en suite shower room. Bedroom 2 with en suite. 2 further double bedrooms. Family bathroom. Detached double garage with adjoining workshop and large boarded loft. Parking. Well enclosed garden. EPC C.

OFFERS INVITED £825,000



TUFTON

A stunning barn conversion with spacious stylish and beautifully presented accommodation which is highly appointed throughout, together with a substantial attached four car double height barn, large walled landscaped garden and a communally owned stretch of river bank bordering The Test.



Drawing room. Dining area. TV area. Luxury kitchen with adjoining breakfast area and living room. Mezzanine study area/gallery. Utility room. Cloakroom. Master bedroom with dressing area and en suite. 3 further bedroom suites. Twin bay barn/garage. Parking. Beautiful landscaped level gardens with summerhouse. Communally owned grassed area and stretch of river bank bordering The Test.

OFFERS INVITED £1,150,000

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UP TO
£50



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G4588 Three-Piece Set **£59.99** Was £89.99

G4589 Six-Piece Set **£129.99** Was £179.99



Six-Piece Set

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P&P (per order)				£4.95
Grand Total				£

100971

BEHIND *the* PEN

National Portrait Gallery London



Olivia Manning

Fortunes of War writer, Olivia Manning may be Portsmouth's most underrated author

WORDS:
Stephen Roberts

Authoress of *Fortunes of War* – born here 2 March 1908'. If there was a blue plaque to Olivia Manning in the North End of Portsmouth, it would probably say something like that. Sadly, there isn't. That doesn't mean, however, that there aren't places around the city that can connect us to this literary heavyweight, who should be far better known than she is.

That 'North End' was derived from the place's origin as a northern expansion of Kingston, its north end no less. Today, it is a predominantly residential area in the midst of Portsea Island,

which grew rapidly from being on a horse-drawn tram route, connecting Portsmouth with Cosham. Comprising primarily late-19th to early-20th century housing stock, it would have been in just such a dwelling that Olivia Manning was born.

There are places in the city that link directly with Olivia. Take Victoria Park, for example, where the future authoress

'Comprising primarily late-19th to early-20th century housing stock, it would have been in just such a dwelling that Olivia Manning was born'

pored over books borrowed from the public library, forming the ideas that evolved into her novels. It is a place of peace and tranquillity even today and it is easy to imagine how it might have inspired Olivia in an earlier, less hurried era. And then there's a building of today's University, but formerly both the public library, from where she obtained her precious books, and the municipal college, that she also attended. The University actually dates to 1908, the year of Olivia's birth, when the 'Park building' opened as the college and library. Perhaps this would be a suitable home for that blue plaque? ▶



If not the college, then back in North End, one of the residential roads is Laburnum Grove, a thoroughfare which includes ‘the house of Olivia Manning’s youth’ and is therefore also a prime candidate for that plaque.

Given this is a long, straight road of residences, it fits with Olivia’s own description of the street where she was born as the ‘longest, dreariest avenue in England’. A little harsh, but then someone did once dub the authoress ‘Olivia Moaning’: her career as a novelist often dominated by her complaints about her lack of standing in the literary world.

Olivia’s Dad, Oliver Manning, was a naval officer, who’d risen from humble origins. It was when visiting Belfast, in 1904, that he met publican’s daughter Olivia Morrow, 14 years his junior. They married within a month, in December 1904.

When Olivia was born just over three years later, she was named

‘Olivia’s first steps towards literary fame occurred in her home city’

after her mother. Olivia seems to have been a ‘Daddy’s Girl’, a tendency that was amplified after her brother, Oliver, was born in 1913.

A sickly lad, his mother’s fussing over him served to alienate a marginalised Olivia. It seems that Olivia, in a fit of pique, even tried hurting her sibling on more than one occasion. It amounted to a childhood that began rosily, but turned sour, an experience that made a lasting impression on her life and work.

With her Dad often at sea, Olivia’s education was peripatetic, sometimes occurring in Ireland but also in Portsmouth, including Lyndon House School, and Portsmouth Grammar.

She developed a sense of not

belonging anywhere, which influenced her writing. She did get into reading young though, although her mother discouraged this, judging that skills such as typing would be more useful.

She was also a talented artist, undertaking evening classes at the Portsmouth Municipal School of Art and even having a picture selected for an exhibition at Southsea. By the age of 20, however, Olivia’s mind was fixed – she would be a writer.

Olivia’s first steps towards literary fame occurred in her home city. She had three serialised crime novels published in the Portsmouth News, starting in 1929, and adopted a suitable pseudonym, ‘Jacob Morrow’.

Manning would not finally



Gary Allman



Editor5807



MyPix

LEFT: Olivia attended Portsmouth Grammar School as a child

TOP RIGHT: Portsmouth's Victoria Park would have inspired the young Olivia Manning

ABOVE RIGHT: The village of Chillerton on the Isle of Wight is the final resting place of Olivia Manning

acknowledge these works as hers until the 1960s. For the budding writer, Portsmouth now felt restrictive, and Manning took flight in 1934, heading for London's bright lights. She was in her mid-20s by this time.

Although she left Portsmouth behind, Manning's home city inspired at least one of her novels, *The Play Room* (1969), which is set in 'North Camperlea', a fictional version of North End. Here, Manning's young heroine unloads her own youthful frustrations as she aspires to swap something dreary and run-down for the gaiety of London. It's a 'coming of age' tale with a father figure based on her own Dad.

Olivia carved a niche for herself as a serious author, who ambitiously attempted to depict the panorama of modern history, but within the framework of a fictional setting. Her first novel, in her own name, was *The Wind Changes* (1937), a couple of years before her marriage to

R.D. (Reginald Donald) Smith, who had literary pretensions of his own. After the war, Manning published *School for Love* (1951), the tale of a 16-year-old lad in a war-scarred Jerusalem.

Olivia's 'Magnum Opus', however, was her *Balkan Trilogy*, published in three parts between 1960 and 1965. It's the story of Guy Pringle and his wife Harriet and is set in the Balkans, that powder-keg of south-eastern Europe, as WW2 gets underway. As the first book opens, the Germans are advancing into Poland and the couple have been married less than a week, having only met a month ago (this sounds like the story of Olivia's parents). Olivia's husband, who it has been mooted may have been a spy, probably inspired the character of 'Guy'. The tale feels semi-autobiographical.

As if that wasn't sufficient, another trilogy followed, *A Levant Trilogy*, the 'Levant' referring to the area of the Eastern

Mediterranean synonymous with the Holy Land. The two trilogies are known collectively as *Fortunes of War*.

The final part of *A Levant Trilogy* was published posthumously, for Manning suffered a stroke, early in July 1980, while visiting friends on the Isle of Wight, and died in hospital in Ryde, on the 23rd. Her ashes were scattered on the island, at Billingham Manor in Chillerton.

Olivia moaned about her lack of recognition and seems to have had a point. It was only when *Fortunes of War* was adapted for television in 1987 that posthumous fame came her way. She reportedly said, "I don't want fame when I'm dead," but this seems to be what she got.

As far as her writing is concerned, however, she remains 'underrated and underread'. Perhaps Portsmouth should consider that blue plaque. It feels overdue. 🐼



HAMPSHIRE PUZZLES

Take a break with our Hampshire dialect quiz and monthly crossword

Talking hog

Adam Jacot de Boinod was born in Aldershot and brought up in Eversley, the home of Charles Kingsley, and lived close to Monteagle Lane in Yateley, where the gunpowder plot was hatched. He was a researcher for the television series QI and is the author of The Meaning of Tingo and Other Extraordinary Words from Around the World, published by Penguin Books. Each month he sets us a “Call-My-Bluff Quiz” on our local Hampshire dialect. Guess the right answers for the definitions of the following words:

1) THIEF

a) a second helping

- b) a young ewe
c) an inexpensive and useless present
- 2) SPREATHED
a) bitten by frost
b) impecunious, broke
c) struck with a stomach ache
- 3) BUNNY
a) a small ravine opening to the sea
b) pretentious nonsense, bullshit
c) of a girl: forward, romping
- 4) SOUSE
a) something unprofitable
b) a box on the ear
c) the face, ears, feet, and tail of a hog, eaten cold after it has been boiled



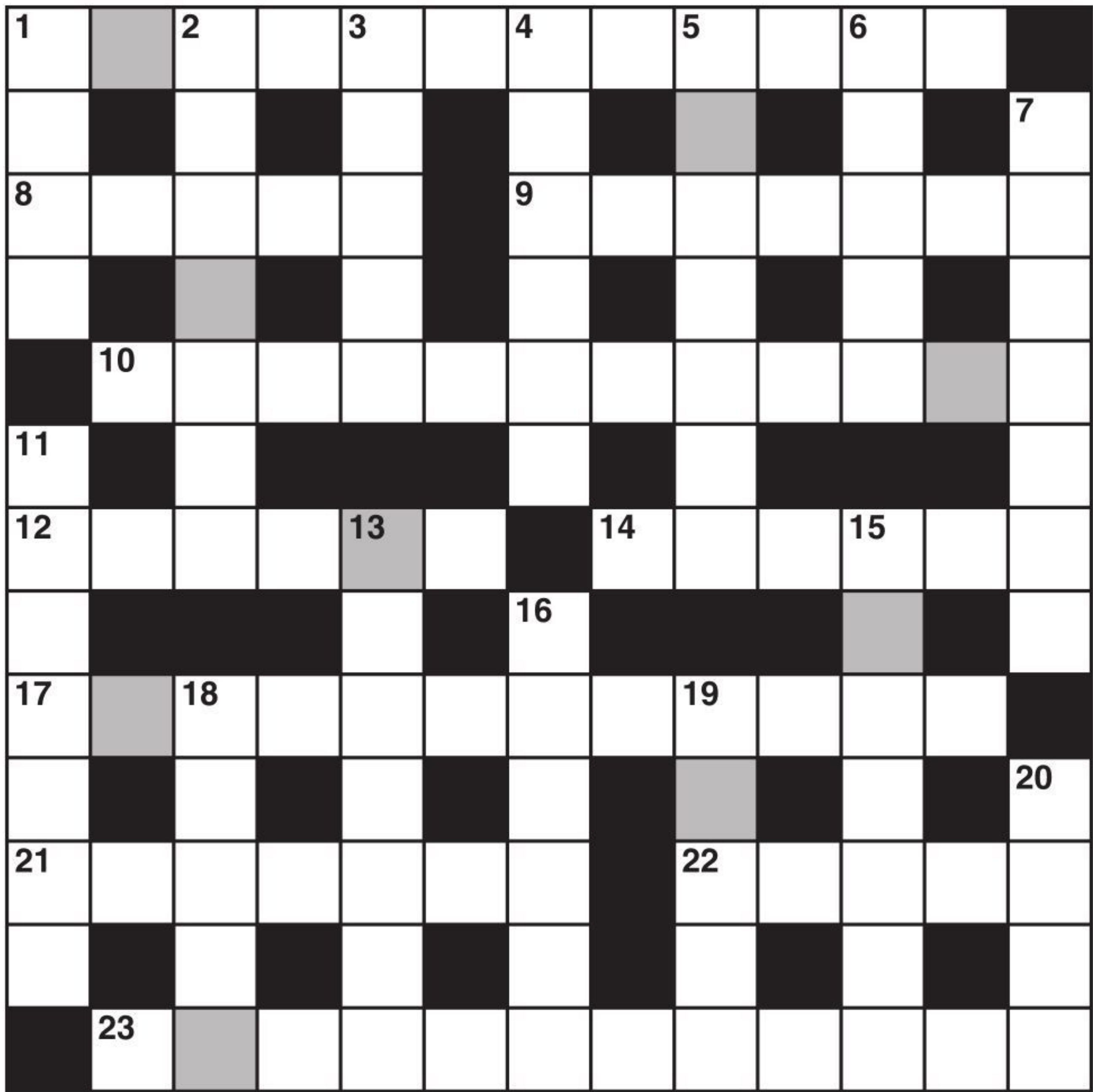
istock/Getty Images Plus/Brackish_nz

Who’s looking at Ewe kid?

CROSSWORD

When the grid is complete, rearrange the letters in the highlighted squares to spell out a Hampshire village that is home to one of the oldest-known cricket clubs

SET BY: PUZZLER



LAST MONTH’S ANSWERS:

HIDDEN WORD: POPULATION

ACROSS: 1 Torres Strait 8 Annie 9 Tostada 10 Collared dove 12 Evelyn

14 Settle 17 Capital gains 21 Arabian 22 Eagle 23 Glamis Castle

DOWN: 1 That 2 Ransome 3 Ewell 4 Saturn 5 Rushdie 6 Idaho 7 Waveney

11 Redcoat 13 Yttrium 15 Tonight 16 Clunes 18 Pearl 19 Arena 20 Pele

TALKING HOG JULY ANSWERS: 1:b, 2:a, 3:a, 4:c

Across

- 1 Hypersensitivity to a drug (12)
8 Italian producer of the 1960 film Two Women (5)
9 London borough of Brent region (7)
10 Penny Black, eg (7,5)
12 Russia’s capital city (6)
14 Sir Frederick ____, ballet choreographer (6)
17 Political sitcom starring Peter Capaldi (3,5,2,2)
21 Popular sweet spread (7)
22 Sputnik 2’s canine passenger in 1957 (5)
23 1935 Greta Garbo film (4,8)

Down

- 1 1960s secret agent drama series starring Robert Culp (1,3)
2 Descriptive of rock formed by heat (7)
3 Jonathan ____, 18th-century Anglo-Irish writer (5)
4 Mind-body-spirit cultural trend (3,3)
5 Egyptian pharaoh (7)
6 ____ Hayek, Mexican-born film star (5)
7 Swelling of the abdomen due to gas (7)
11 Czech composer of The Bartered Bride (7)
13 Daughter of Polonius in Shakespeare’s play Hamlet (7)
15 Georgia’s capital city (7)
16 Simon ____, writer and presenter of A History of Britain (6)
18 ____ John, singer/songwriter (5)
19 Stan’s comedy partner of the 1920s (5)
20 Mother of Uranus in Greek mythology (4)

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